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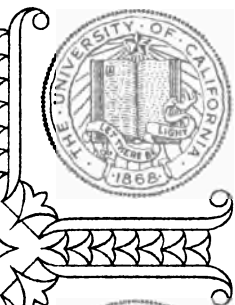
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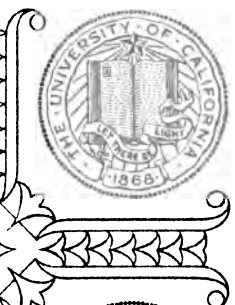
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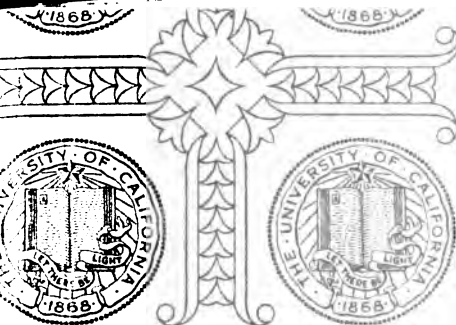
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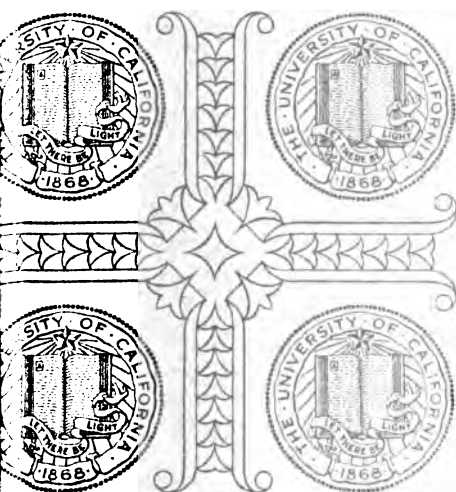
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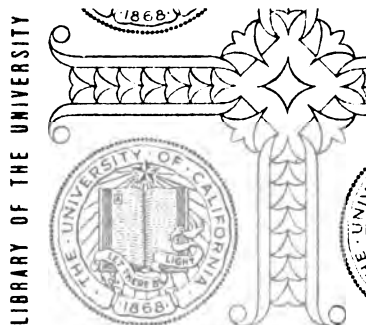
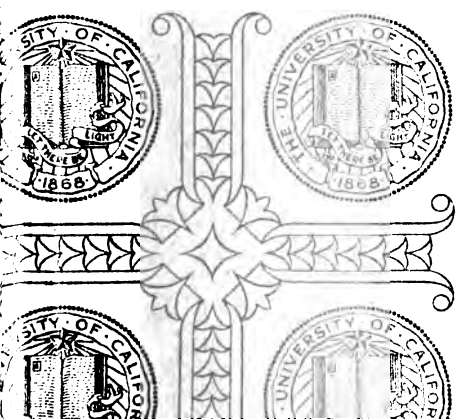
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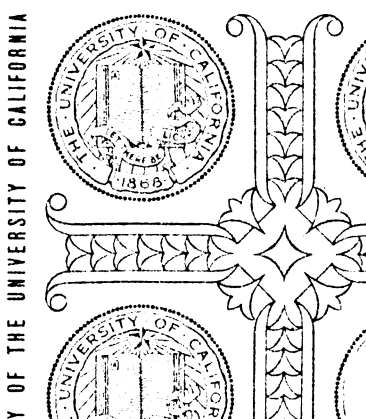
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NOTES

ON THE

ANTI-CORN LAW STRUGGLE.

BY

ANDREW BISSET.



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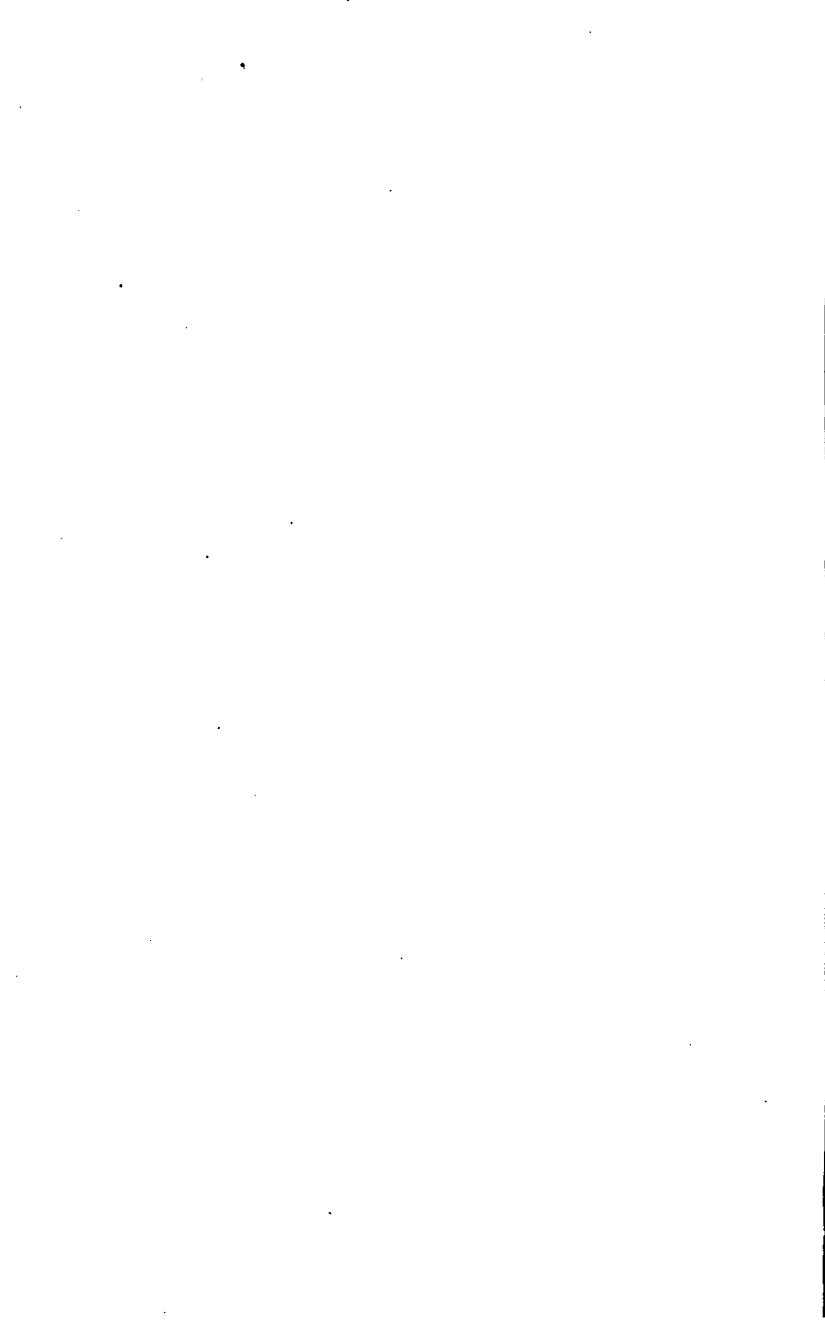
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NOTES ON THE ANTI-CORN LAW STRUGGLE.

INTRODUCTION.

IN revising my MS. of "Notes on the Anti-Corn Law Struggle," I am struck with the fact that one-third or more of the book is the work of him who was throughout the whole of the Struggle the advocate in Parliament of the Repeal of the Corn Laws ; and is now the only survivor of a group of contemporaries among whom "*si mea fama in obscuro sit, nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum, meo qui nomini afficient, me consoler.*"

I will state shortly what led me to become one of the labourers in the work of repealing the Corn Laws. On the 17th of January, 1842, I received a note signed Adam Scott, stating that the writer had been requested to communicate with me on

behalf of the Anti-Corn Law League. A day or two after, Mr. Adam Scott* called on me at my chambers in Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, and informed me that the matter on which the Council of the Anti-Corn Law League were desirous of consulting me was the Land-Tax. After some correspondence and several conferences I received from Mr. Scott a letter, dated March 17, 1842, stating that Mr. Cobden had requested him to make an appointment for the following day. On the 18th of March, 1842, Mr. Cobden and Mr. Scott called together, between eleven and twelve o'clock, at my chambers.

In 1842 and the following three years the prospects of those who laboured for the repeal of the Corn Laws were not very good. When members of the League went into the agricultural districts the farmers did not give them a friendly reception. I have heard witnesses of the fact speak of the farmers on one occasion bringing the

* Mr. Adam Scott was the author of two able pamphlets, entitled "Anti-Corn Law Tract, No. 1. A Plea for the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, with remarks on the Land-Tax fraud," London, 1842; and "Anti-Corn Law Tract, No. 2. Sir Robert Peel's Burdens on Land," London, 1842.

hose of a fire-engine to bear upon the Free Tradespeaker. Those who were travelling through the country to endeavour to diffuse some knowledge of political economy had to encounter not only hostile opinions, but the *argumentum baculinum*. One of those lecturers told me that (at Dorchester, I think it was) he observed a stalwart man in the front row of the audience with a large cudgel of which he appeared to make rather an ostentatious, not to say menacing, display.

Of the argument which I drew up in the case submitted to me professionally on behalf of the Council of the Anti-Corn Law League, the Council printed at the time two thousand copies for distribution to Members of Parliament. Mr. Cobden was repeatedly applied to for copies, and he referred applicants to me. Among those who noticed my argument on the Land-Tax was a critic in a weekly publication, who described my argument as that of "a writer of Mr. Bright's school," and said, "it was with universal assent that all the tenures were at the Restoration simplified into the form of free and common socage."

So far was it from "universal assent" that the resolution by which the excise was substituted for the feudal dues was only carried by a majority of

two in a House of three hundred Members—one hundred and fifty-one to one hundred and forty-nine—many Members urging in the strongest terms the injustice of the measure.*

This critic goes on to say: "If Mr. Bright had been then alive he might fairly have urged the justice of commuting an obsolete burden for a moderate land-tax; but the latter impost, which still exists under that name, furnishes an ample equivalent for one of the least productive revenues which belonged to the Crown."

The answer to this is that a question which all through the reign of James I. occupied very much of the time and attention of the Parliament was the mode of getting rid of the feudal tenures. The same hand which drew the Petition of Right drew up an account of a motion made at the Parliament in the eighteenth year of the reign of James I. for commuting the feudal tenures and payments into a "competent yearly rent, to be assured to his Majesty, his heirs, and successors" (4 Inst., 202, 203). This motion Coke stamps with his approbation, "hoping that so good a

* Parliamentary History, vol. iv., pp. 148, 149.—*Comm. Journ.*, Nov. 21, 1660.

motion will some time or other, by authority of Parliament, one way or other, take effect and be established." The amount of the rent-charge which was to be substituted for the feudal payments was equal to nearly one-half of the whole revenue at that time (Sinclair, "Hist. Revenue," vol. i., pp. 233, 244); and as the value of the land would increase with the wealth and revenue of the kingdom, the proportion would remain the same.

The confidence with which this anonymous writer expressed himself on the subject of the Land-Tax, induces me to mention one of the numerous applications for a copy of my argument on the Land-Tax, because it shows, notwithstanding the judgment of this anonymous critic, that the soundness of the reasoning as well as of the legal learning of my argument has been stamped with the approbation of some of the highest legal authorities.

In Michaelmas Term, 1852, an eminent counsel—a Member of Parliament—who was engaged in a heavy land-tax case with the then Attorney-General, Sir Alexander Cockburn, afterwards Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, having applied to all the law booksellers, without effect, for a copy of the

pamphlet which was out of print—indeed, I don't know that it was ever actually published for sale—I sent him a copy and received soon after the following note from him:—"Allow me to thank you most sincerely for your very able and valuable pamphlet on the Land-Tax, which has been of great use and value to me."

On the 6th November, 1844, I received a letter from Mr. Cobden, dated Manchester, 5th November, 1844, in which he said:—

"There is an idea talked of here of sending a Commission of Inquiry into two or three of the southern counties, say Dorset, Somerset, Wilts, to ascertain the condition of the labouring population, and particularly how much of the average earnings of a peasant's family goes in purchasing clothing and articles paying excise or duty to Government. As the only way of making such an inquiry useful would be by having men of character and respectability to put their names to the report, it is thought that one person from Manchester and another from London would be best suited to the labour. The object would be simply an inquiry into facts, without meddling with theories, whether of Corn Law or Poor Law. Do you think you would be able to give six weeks to such an investigation, between this and Christmas, if the plan were carried out?"

In consequence of unavoidable delays it was not till towards the middle of December that the

gentleman joined with me in this Commission, Mr. Philip Holland, and myself took our departure for Salisbury.

It will be of use in throwing light on the subject to give here the credentials, or at least the credential letter, dated 10th December, 1844, and addressed to A. Bisset, Esq., and P. Holland, Esq. The following is a copy of the letter :—

“MY DEAR SIRs,

“I have not time to write notes to all those with whom I am personally acquainted, or whom I know to be friendly, in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset; but you will be good enough in the first instance to show this to Mr. Lambert, solicitor, Salisbury, and to Mr. Squarey, and they will, I am sure, not only give all the personal aid in their power, but also give you letters of introduction which will aid you in your inquiries in all parts of the country. I have sent you a list of names of parties to whom I would advise you to apply; and be good enough to use this letter as an introduction, if necessary.

“Believe me, my dear Sirs,

“Yours faithfully,

“RICHARD COBDEN.”

This letter was written at the offices of the Anti-Corn Law League, in Spring Gardens, London, on the evening of the 10th December,

1844. It was a very hard frost. I had been waiting all the evening to receive this credential letter from Mr. Cobden, who was in his bed-room, with a large fire, receiving people on business, of which he had a vast deal on his hands. He wrote this letter while I was in the room with him; and it struck me as an example of his great aptitude for business that though he had been occupied for several hours by a succession of visitors who sought his counsel or direction on the business of the League, quite apart from the business on which I came to him, he immediately proceeded to write the letter above quoted, and with such precision and accuracy that he did not need to alter a word or even a letter, as I can see from the original letter now lying before me.

I left London on Saturday, December 14th, 1844. I reached Salisbury towards evening the same day, and called on Mr. Lambert the same evening. Some time after my return to London, in January, 1845, I made a report to Mr. Cobden of the result of my inquiries. I will refer in the fifth chapter to some points in my report that may appear of importance and interest; and I may say here that I found myself upon an engagement very difficult. Besides the difficulty of getting

at the truth from the imperfect machinery we had for examining witnesses, there was getting up, in an unusually severe winter, at 4, or even sometimes 3 A.M., to catch a coach; and the farmers, who thought their interests identical with those of their landlords, threatened to shoot us if we came upon their ground. I remember in particular a room in an inn at Cranbourne, the door of which would not close though the frost was intense; and I remember my colleague, after taking great pains for some hours in examining a witness, saying, at the conclusion of his labour, "It's hard work!"

Some time after my return to London I made a report to Mr. Cobden of the result of my inquiries. I first made a somewhat short report in order that Mr. Cobden might have it in his hands before making a speech on a certain day in the House of Commons. Some months after I made a longer and more elaborate report, in which I compared the condition of the agricultural labourers at that time in England with their condition at other times. I showed, on the best evidence I could obtain, that in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries the wages of the agricultural labourer in England were such as to

procure for him nearly double the quantity of food which his wages between 1740 and 1794 procured, and that the wages obtained by him from 1834 to 1844, as measured by the quantity of produce, were considerably less than in the period between 1740 and 1794. I also showed that under the combined operation of the Poor Law of 1790 and the Corn Law of 1815 the wages of agricultural labour were lower, and the condition of the agricultural labourer was worse than at any former period except that in which the Poor Law of Elizabeth was passed.

In attempting to make a table of wages, the most that can be looked for is an approximation to the truth. Besides the difference of wages in different counties, there are the variations through the various seasons of the year—winter, summer, haytime, harvest. In a table which I drew up with great care to show the comparative amount of wages in pints of wheat from the fifteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, I have taken the summer wages as the basis of the calculation, because that basis afforded greater facilities for comparison, from the fact that in the early rates of wages fixed at various times by the legislature, or by the magistrates acting ~~under~~ the

authority of a legislative enactment, a certain scale of wages is always given from Easter till Michaelmas, with the exception of harvest, when a somewhat higher rate is allowed. It appears from this table, which was drawn up from the best authorities, which authorities are cited at the foot of it, that wages were much higher in the fifteenth century than they have ever been since; that, about the middle of the eighteenth century, they were higher than they had ever been since the sixteenth; that from the middle of the eighteenth century they declined till they attained a minimum about 1824; that, after the agricultural riots and burnings of 1830-31, they rose considerably, so as to be for a time higher than they had been for upwards of fifty years. But the rise caused by the riots of 1830 and 1831 was only temporary. I subjoin the table to which I have referred.

Year.	Wheat per quarter.		Summer wages. per week, not including haytime and harvest.			
			In money.		In wheat.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	Winch. measur.	
1495 . . .	6	3½(a)	2	0(b)	163	pinta
1514 . . .	8	8(c)	2	0(d)	118	„
1545 . . .	18	8(e)	2	6(f)	68	„
1593 . . .	20	0(g)	2	6(h)	64	„
1610 . . .	34	1(i)	3	6(j)	52	„
1725 . . .	35	4(k)	5	0(l)	72	„
1750 . . .	29	2½(m)	7	0(n)	122	„
1763 . . .	33	1½(o)	7	0(p)	108	„
1770 . . .	41	4(q)	7	4½(r)	92	„
1792-4 . .	46	9(s)	8	5½(t)	94	„
1824 . . .	64	0	8	7(u)	68	„
1832-3 . .	55	9½	11	5(v)	104	„

(a) Average of nineteen years, in Sir F. Eden's tables.

(b) Stat. 11, Hen. VII., c. 22.

(c) Average of the prices in Sir F. Eden's tables.

(d) Stat. 16, Hen. VIII., c. 3.

(e) Sir F. Eden's tables.

(f) Ibid.

(g) Average, or below it, in Eden's tables.

(h) Rate fixed by justices of East Riding of Yorkshire in 1593.

(i) Eden, Appendix No. III.

(j) Rate of Rutlandshire justices in 1610.

(k) Eden, Appendix, p. lxxix.

(l) Rate of Lancashire justices, 1725.

(m) Eton tables, cited Tooke, "History of Prices," i., 48.

(n) Tooke's "History of Prices," i., 65. The wages here given are the general mean for the whole year. The summer wages are very near the general mean, as appears by the proportions in Arthur Young's "Six Weeks' Tour," p 333. The equality is produced by the excess of the summer wages over the winter's being balanced by the excess of the harvest wages over the summer.

(o) Tooke, *ibid.*

(p) *Ibid.*

(q) Parliamentary Return.

(r) *Ibid.*

(s) *Ibid.*

(t) Summer wages, computed as above, from the accounts drawn up for the Board of Agriculture.

(u) Average of all England from Report of Committee on Labourers' Wages in 1824.

(v) Average of all the counties of England, from Appendix (B) to the Poor Law Commissioners' Report in 1834. This result has been obtained from a careful examination and analysis of the returns from more than 1200 parishes. But the average seems too high, even allowing for the temporary rise caused by the riots of 1830 and 1831.



CHAPTER I.

WAS THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS THE EFFECT
OF ORATORY?

It may be of use to try to discover what really won the battle between the manufacturers and the landholders on the question of the Corn Laws. For it was a battle between those two powerful classes, and the poor man, whose cheap loaf was put forward as the principal *casus belli*, had very little, indeed nothing, to say in the matter except so far as his voice might be heard through the exertions of his advocates, General Thompson and Mr. Villiers, who could hardly obtain a hearing in the House of Commons ; indeed, General Thompson distinctly says, in his published "Letters to his Constituents," that he was trampled on in the House of Commons, and Mr. Villiers had such powerful opposition to encounter, that, as Mr. Disraeli said in his generous tribute to the character of a political adversary, "anybody but the hon. and learned Member for Wolverhampton would have sunk in the unequal fray."

Sir Robert Peel attributed his change of opinion on the subject of the Corn Laws to "the unadorned eloquence of Richard Cobden." Mr. Cobden was certainly at once a most agreeable and a most effective speaker. Mr. Bright, who may be admitted to be a very competent judge, said in a note to me, "Mr. Cobden's speaking was to me always charming, so simple, easy, and true. He did not often rouse to passion, but his power to convince was something wonderful."

The words here applied by Mr. Bright to Mr. Cobden's speaking may truly be applied to Mr. Bright's own speaking, of which, as of Mr. Cobden's, force and clearness are the characteristics. Nevertheless the repeal of the Corn Laws was not the work of the eloquence adorned or unadorned of Mr. Cobden, or of anybody else. Neither did eloquence nor logic, nor even geometrical reasoning ever decide any great conflict of opinion, as was said by Hobbes more than two hundred years ago. If it had been contrary to the interest of men who were the ruling power in a country that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles, that doctrine would have been suppressed in that country.

It was the opinion of Philip of Macedon that he

could subdue the States of Greece, and that he was under no moral obligation not to use his power for that purpose. Except to enthusiastic schoolboys it appears absurd to suppose that any words, though uttered by the greatest speaker known among men, could either turn Philip from his purpose or turn the Greeks of that time into the Greeks who had fought at Marathon and Salamis, or turn himself into Miltiades or Themistocles.

It was the opinion of Charles Stuart that he had certain rights over the souls, bodies, lands, goods and chattels of the people of England, which rights, if carried out as he sought to carry them out, did not leave to the people of England any souls, bodies, lands, goods and chattels which they could call their own. The eloquence of John Pym, whether it be called adorned or unadorned, was certainly equal to the eloquence, "the unadorned eloquence," to borrow the phrase of Sir Robert Peel, of Richard Cobden. But it was not the eloquence of John Pym that settled the controversy, it was an eloquence or a logic, the nature of which is well expressed in Cornet Joyce's answer to King Charles, who asked if he had any authority in writing. Joyce pointed to a body of about one thousand soldiers mounted and drawn up behind him, and

said, "that the soldiers behind him were his commission, being a commanded party out of every regiment." The courtiers, in the great struggle for liberty, laughed and jeered at the eloquence of the talking members of the Commons' House of Parliament. The landowners, in the struggle for freedom of trade, did not drive their view of the question between them and the Free-traders so far as the King did his view of the question between him and the Parliament ; for as the battles of Marston Moor and Naseby settled the question of the divine right of Kings, the pecuniary resources of Lancashire, rendered more formidable by the Irish Famine, settled the question of the divine right of squires.

The extraordinary power of enchaining the attention of their audience, displayed by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, particularly by Mr. Bright in the latter part of his career—for some twenty years ago he had not nearly the popularity he now has, inasmuch as a weekly publication, intending to damage a book which I published with my name, did not give either my name or that of my book, but described me as "a writer of Mr. Bright's school,"—may give occasion for a few words on the old and much debated question whether

oratory, eloquence, or the faculty of an orator is a gift of nature, or can be taught by a teacher like those Greek professors of philosophy who professed to be able to teach eloquence, or by careful study of Demosthenes and Cicero, and other great orators.

Dogmatists have been heard to affirm that they could by education out of any human being make a great philosopher, a great statesman, or a great orator, as surely as a shoemaker out of a given piece of leather could make a good pair of shoes. Two thousand years before this dogmatic assertion was made, Socrates in the *Gorgias* of Plato asks Gorgias what the art was which he practised. "Rhetoric," answered Gorgias. "You are then a rhetorician?" "A good one." "And you are capable of making others so?" "I profess to be capable." It must be noted that the Greek word *ρήτωρ*, denoting a public speaker or orator as well as a rhetorician or teacher of rhetoric, the meaning of Gorgias was that he professed to be capable of making men not merely rhetoricians but orators. Cicero also wrote much with the object of showing that eloquence or the faculty of an orator was susceptible of being taught. Alas! of the hundreds of medallists, double firsts, senior, second, &c., wranglers, how few have turned out great orators.

and how many have shared the fate of a certain senior wrangler who assured his clients that he could plead their cause triumphantly before the Lord Chancellor! "But, Lord! Sir," said the clients, "the Lord Chancellor would not listen to him." Alas! for the glory of medallists, senior wranglers, double firsts, and the whole tribe of such! Eloquence is not more capable of being taught than poetry. It is as true of the orator as of the poet, that he must be born not made; and the votes and verdicts gained by studying Demosthenes and Cicero may be classed with the battles won by lessons of tactics and strategics, and the epic poems written by the rules of criticism.

It is not after a short or narrow course of observation that I have come to this conclusion. In early life I was one of a party of young men who met at the chambers of one of them to study some of the mechanical parts of public speaking—such as articulation, modulation, expression in reading aloud. Two of those who thus met became eminent—one as a parliamentary speaker, the other as a philosophical writer, and late in life as a clear and logical parliamentary speaker. But neither of these two men, who may be said to have studied oratory, became nearly so great, either as orators

or debaters, as Mr. Disraeli, who did not, as far as I know, study Demosthenes or practice at a debating society; nor as Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, who also did not study Demosthenes or practice at a debating society. And one remarkable element among the materials on which my conclusion rests, that eloquence cannot be taught, is my having had an opportunity of observing Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, who were formed by nature, and not by any professional teacher like Gorgias, or any model like Demosthenes or Cicero.

Mr. Cobden once said to me that the first time he got up to speak in public he was so nervous that he hardly knew what he was saying. That nervousness would, of course, wear off in time, or at least diminish; for some public speakers have said that to the last they never got up to speak in the House of Commons without a feeling of nervousness. But Mr. Cobden would appear to have attained an extraordinary command over his mental resources when addressing a public audience. I should not think that he ever wrote out a speech, or even particular passages of a speech, on a question which he considered of special importance. He did sometimes make, or intend to make, a

few short notes. I say intend to make, from the following circumstance. One evening when I was going from Spring Gardens with him and Mr. C. P. Villiers in a cab to one of the meetings of the Anti-Corn Law League, in Covent Garden Theatre, Mr. Cobden, as he tore up and threw out of the cab window a piece of paper which he held in his hand, said that, as he was obliged to speak that evening at Covent Garden, he had intended to write down some notes of what he might say, but that he had been interrupted by people wanting to see him on business, and had therefore been unable to write down anything. The result was an excellent and most effective speech.

Even when an orator appears to treat certain topics in a manner bearing some resemblance to the manner of Demosthenes, we should not be entitled to conclude that such orator was imitating or even had ever read Demosthenes. I do not remember ever meeting with such a resemblance between the manner of a modern orator and the manner of Demosthenes as occurs in a passage of a speech of Robespierre. The words of Robespierre are :—
“ Non, nous n'avous point failli ; j'en jure par le trône renversé, et par la République qui s'élève ! ”
These words bear a certain resemblance to the

celebrated passage in the "De Coronâ":—"Ὁ
 ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν, ὅπως ἡμάρτετε, ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τὸ
 ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπάντων ἐλευθερίας καὶ σωτηρίας κίνδυνον
 ἀράμενοι; οὐ μὰ τὸν ἐν Μαραθῶνι προκινδυνεύσαντα
 —κ. τ. λ."

I have heard a successful candidate relate that a
 man who stood against him for Preston—a man
 famous for his power of coarse invective, and of whom Mr. Pitt, when he once met him in company
 said, "A clever man, but too coarse,"—called some
 one he was inveighing against, "an aristocratic
 spitting-box." I think it was Lord Stanley he
 thus designated. This is the nearest approach
 that has come within my observation to the Greek
 oratory. The designation given by Demosthenes
 to Æschines — τὸν κατάπτυστον τουτονὶ — is very
 lamely and imperfectly reproduced by the words
 "this despicable fellow," in Mr. Kennedy's trans-
 lation. The power of invective, that is of applying
 to an opponent the language of reproach, depre-
 ciation, and contempt, has always been reckoned
 one of the weapons of an orator. But there is a
 species of language which goes beyond this, and
 may be described as foul and abusive—language
 such as is used by the lowest ruffians. I do not
 remember in any English orator any specimens of

such filth as is discharged by Demosthenes and Æschines against each other. For instance, calling Æschines "this spat-upon fellow," and insulting the poverty of Æschines's youth and attacking the character of his mother, which last is on a level with the London waterman's scurrility, of which Johnson gave a caricature when he returned the answer to an abusive attack from a passing boat—"Your mother is a receiver of stolen goods under the pretence of keeping a brothel."

Lord Macaulay says, in the beginning of his article on "History," that it would be impossible to alter a word in some speeches of Demosthenes without altering it for the worse. The article on "History" was published in 1828. I doubt if he would have expressed the same opinion in 1844, when the article on "Barère" was published. I have read again lately the *Leptines* and *Midias* of Demosthenes and the *Seventh Book* of Thucydides. Demosthenes may have great power of abuse combined with little regard to truth, and Thucydides has narrated some things well; nevertheless, I place Macaulay above Demosthenes for power of invective, and above Thucydides for power of narrative; and I could not name any historian, ancient or modern, whom it is a pleasure

to read except Macaulay. Mr. Kennedy's version of τὸν κατὰπτυστον τουτονὶ into "this despicable fellow" is only one of many proofs that Demosthenes is untranslatable. The character of the invective partakes too much of the filth of Swift to be fit for translation into English, at least in the nineteenth century. It may have been fit when Swift wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and it may be—(*Di meliora !*)—again in the twentieth century. But perhaps Macaulay's article on "Barère" may give some idea to an Englishman of the effect on an Athenian of the power of Demosthenes in invective.

Whether the invective of Demosthenes or that of Æschines surpasses anything that human genius can ever again produce, as far as my limited observation extends, Lord Macaulay's invective on "Barère" appears to be a censure of no slight nature. I will venture to quote one or two sentences of Lord Macaulay's article on "Barère:—

"In two things he was consistent, in his love of Christianity and in his hatred to England. If this were so, we must say that England is much more beholden to him than Christianity.

* * *

"Renegade, traitor, slave, coward, liar, slanderer, murderer, hack writer, police spy—the one small service which he



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could render to England was to hate her: and such as he was may all who hate her be!"

Barère, it appears, adhered to the Christian faith through the whole Revolution; through all that time when he made his Reports,—which were popularly called Carmagnoles, of which, as Lord Macaulay says, whoever has read Lord Ellenborough's proclamations can form a complete idea;—through that time, when on the day on which the Queen was dragged to her doom, he regaled Robespierre and some other Jacobins at a tavern; where, in the intervals between the beaune and the champagne, between the ragout of thrushes and the partridge with truffles, he preached his political creed: "The vessel of the Revolution can float into port only on waves of blood."

This,—that is, the union of love of Christianity and hatred to England,—this, says Lord Macaulay,

"Makes the character complete. Whatsoever things are false, whatsoever things are dishonest, whatsoever things are unjust, whatsoever things are impure, whatsoever things are hateful, whatsoever things are of evil report, if there be any vice, and if there be any infamy, all these things, we know, were blended in Barère. But one thing was still wanting, and that M. Hippolyte Carnot has supplied. When to such an assemblage of qualities a high profession of piety is added, the effect becomes overpowering. We sink

under the contemplation of such exquisite and manifold perfection ; and feel, with deep humility, how presumptuous it was in us to think of composing the legend of the beatified athlete of the faith St. Bertrand of the Carmagnoles."

Besides the extreme coarseness of invective of the Athenian orators, the orators, rhetors, and historians "indulged," says Mr. Grote,* "in so much exaggeration and untruth respecting this convention that they have raised a suspicion against themselves." "The passages of these orators (Æschines, "De Fals. Legat.," c. 54, p. 300, and "Andokides or the Pseudo-Andokides," De Pace, c. 1) involve so much both of historical and chronological inaccuracy that it is unsafe to cite them, and impossible to amend them except by conjecture."† "The loose language of these orators (Demosthenes, Lykurgus, Isokrates) renders it impossible to determine what was the precise limit in respect of vicinity to the coast."‡

Nevertheless, it may be seen, as James Mill has said in his article *Colony* in the supplement to "Encyclopædia Britannica," from the Athenian orators that the licence of the rich and powerful

* Grote's History of Greece, v. 453.

† Ibid., v. 450, note (1).

‡ Ibid., v. 452, note (1).

and their means of oppressing the body of the people were excessive. And so far, notwithstanding the loose language and inaccuracy of the orators, some information may be gathered from them which the historians do not furnish.

In regard to what has been said respecting the opinion that oratory can be taught, it may indeed be contended that to some extent—for instance, as regards the voice and action—oratory may be viewed as an acquired art. I will take two men whose power as orators was admitted to be great, Wedderburn and Erskine, both Scotchmen, and consequently both more or less under the disadvantage of a Scotch accent when addressing an English audience. Wedderburn had practised at the Scotch Bar, before he was called to the English Bar, and is said to have taken lessons in elocution from an actor ; but I never heard that Erskine took any lessons to eradicate his Scotch accent, beyond the lessons he learnt in knocking about the world, when as a boy he passed three years in the Navy, and then from eighteen to twenty-one passed three years in the Army. The line of defence adopted by Erskine for his client prosecuted by the House of Commons for publishing the Rev. Mr. Logan's tract on Hastings's impeach-

ment, leads Erskine to make a reference to his adventurous youth or boyhood :—

“Gentlemen,” he said, “I think I can observe that you are touched with this way of considering the subject; and I can account for it. I have not been considering it through the cold medium of books, but have been speaking of man and his nature, and of human dominion, from what I have seen of them myself, amongst reluctant nations submitting to our authority. I know what they feel and how such feelings can alone be expressed. I have heard them in my youth from a naked savage, in the indignant character of a prince surrounded by his subjects, addressing the governor of a British colony, holding in his hands a bundle of sticks, as the notes of his unlettered eloquence—‘Who is it,’ said the jealous ruler over the desert encroached upon by the restless foot of English adventurers, ‘who is it that causes this river to rise in the high mountains, and to empty itself into the ocean? Who is it that causes to blow the loud winds of winter, and that calms them again in the summer? Who is it that rears up the shade of those lofty forests, and blasts them with the quick lightning at his pleasure? The same Being who gave to you a country on the other side of the waters, gave ours to us; and by this title we will defend it,’ said the warrior, throwing down his tomahawk upon the ground, and raising the war-sound of his nation. These are the feelings of subjugated men all round the globe; and depend upon it, nothing but fear will control where it is vain to look for affection.”

It is said that Pitt, when Erskine began his

first speech in the House of Commons, took a piece of paper and a pencil as if he intended to make notes, but was observed, after listening attentively for a time, to put up the pencil and drop the paper.

Wedderburn, though he did not stand so high as an advocate at the bar as Erskine, stood considerably higher as a debater in Parliament. Perhaps Wedderburn's most successful forensic display was his Privy-Council speech, of which nothing remains but a small portion of his invective against Franklin, referring to some letters of a colonial governor, which, it was alleged, had come unfairly into the hands of Franklin, then agent of the American colonies in England. Wedderburn's invective against Franklin, one of the three—one of the triumviri, very different from the Roman triumviri—

“ Henry, the forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the seas ;
And stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
Robed in the lightnings which his hand allayed ;
And Washington, the tyrant-tamer,”

is partly taken from a tragedy then well known and popular, now never heard of, a sort of attempt

of Young to rival or at least imitate Shakspeare—a vain attempt—and concludes thus:—

“Amidst tranquil events here is a man who, with the utmost insensibility of remorse, stands up and avows himself the author of all. I can compare him only to Zanga, in Dr. Young’s *Revenge*:—

‘——— Know, then, ’twas I.

I forged the letter—I dispos’d the picture—

I hated—I despis’d—and I destroy.’

I ask, my lords, whether the revengeful temper attributed to the bloody African is not surpassed by the coolness and apathy of the wily American?”

It is said that Franklin, though he betrayed no emotion in the public room, when he got back to his lodgings, took off the suit of clothes he wore, and never wore it again till he affixed his name to the treaty by which the independence of America was acknowledged.

Those who have had the means of the closest observation admit to the full Mr. Cobden’s merits—the ability that he displayed in the organization of the movement—his perception very early that it could only be maintained by money—his knowledge of the Lancashire capitalists and his skill in convincing them of the expediency of employing their capital for the purposes of the Anti-Corn Law League, till the movement reached the point

when *The Times*, observing the amount of the fund collected, declared it was "a great fact," and never after deserted the cause. In the summer of 1845, Mr. Cobden avowed to some of his friends that he was weary of the whole concern. Still he kept in mind that if the crops failed, and there was general distress in the towns, there was a large fund at once to draw upon and go to work with. And that was what happened. The report of the total loss of the food of the Irish was announced before our crops were gathered; and these were announced as greatly defective. Then Sir Robert Peel showed signs of uneasiness, which did not disappear till he proposed his Bill for Abolition in February, 1846.

I have reason to think, from what I have heard from those who had the best opportunities of watching closely the whole course of the movement, that those who subscribed the money firmly believed at the time that the success was entirely due to the fabulous amount of money which had been subscribed, and which the Council of the League had in hand to carry on the agitation. Much the greater part of the money came from Lancashire, chiefly perhaps from Manchester; and what made many of the subscribing capitalists impatient at the time was that this was not fully

admitted; and that, having paid for the article, they were not properly credited with what they had done.

They knew perfectly well that the fund was enormous when the famine broke out in Ireland, and that Peel *surrendered* from fear of the agitation being continued more fiercely than ever in consequence of the famine; and not ten men in a thousand believed the cock-and-bull story of his having been converted by Cobden's "unadorned eloquence," and that too after Cobden's very earnest and argumentative speaking had almost ceased, which it had done in the middle of 1845, two months before the Irish famine.

➤ And what influenced Peel as much as anything was that the farmers were getting discontented, and, whatever they might think of the Manchester school, were coming over to the opinion that they had been deceived by the parliamentary protection promised them.

Of the dependence to be placed on fluency of words, or eloquence, when anything difficult is to be done, an idea may be obtained from what has been said by the most eloquent writer and one of the most eloquent speakers of his time. Lord Macaulay, in the ninth chapter of his History of

England, has given a portrait of two men whose power, such as it was, lay in fluency of speech, one of whom has been selected for an example of patriotism by an eminent writer who, before his death, became Prime Minister of England. The two individuals characterized by Lord Macaulay are Sir Patrick Hume and Wildman.

“Sir Patrick Hume,” says Lord Macaulay, “who had since his flight from Scotland lived humbly at Utrecht, now emerged from his obscurity, but fortunately his eloquence could, on this occasion, do little mischief, for the Prince of Orange was by no means disposed to be the lieutenant of a debating society such as that which had ruined the enterprise of Argyle. The subtle and restless Wildman, who had some time before found England an unsafe residence, and had escaped to Germany, repaired from his retreat to the Prince’s court.” But neither Hume nor Wildman succeeded in obtaining the smallest influence upon the enterprise of a man who was a statesman as well as a soldier.

Free discussion at public meetings, a free press, and a free parliament, although a vast amount of nonsense and worse than nonsense may be uttered or printed, are inseparable from a free people.

Yet it has been remarked by those who have long observed closely the working of political machinery, that great powers of speech united to small powers of judgment are the curse of free governments. The man who is fitted to give the best counsel in a difficult crisis is almost never the man fitted to take the lead in a debating society or in a tumultuous assembly of any kind. There may be cases which may look like exceptions to this remark; nevertheless it has been often desired by those who have reflected on the matter that the blessings of a free government could be obtained without the addition of a curse which almost brings back some of the worst evils of despotism, under which free speech is a thing forbidden.

Those who watched the movement for the repeal of the Corn Laws from its commencement to its close noted four men as the leading spirits in that movement—General Perronet Thompson, elected Member of Parliament for Hull, June, 1835; the Right Hon. C. P. Villiers, elected M.P. for Wolverhampton, January, 1835; Richard Cobden, Esq., elected M.P. for Stockport, August, 1841; the Right Hon. John Bright, elected M.P. for Durham, 1843. The extracts from the letters and speeches of Mr. Cobden, with notices of his life, fill nearly a

thousand printed pages. The extracts from the speeches of Mr. Bright, with notices of his life, fill upwards of eleven hundred printed pages.

As so much has been written about Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright I purpose to write a few words about General Perronet Thompson and the Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers, two men who did something towards showing what effect the Corn Laws had on the condition of all classes of men in Great Britain, and whose exertions on behalf of the poor are not assailable by such weapons as the Quarterly Reviewer has employed when he says in his review of Mr. John Morley's "Life of Cobden":—"Mr. Morley has afforded ample proof that Mr. Cobden's misfortunes were brought about, not by his love for the poor, but by his passion for speculation."

CHAPTER II.

THOMAS PERRONET THOMPSON.

GENERAL THOMAS PERRONET THOMPSON was born at Hull on the 15th of March, 1783. He was the eldest of three sons of Thomas Thompson, a merchant and banker of that town, and for several years M.P. for Midhurst, a borough which, before the Reform Bill of 1832, belonged to his partner Robert Smith, created Baron Carrington of Upton, co. Notts, October 20th, 1797. In October, 1798, Thomas Perronet Thompson commenced keeping terms at Queen's College, Cambridge, and took his B.A. degree after keeping the requisite number of terms. His name appears in the Cambridge University Calendar in the list of honours for the year 1802, as Seventh Wrangler. The name of his youngest brother, Charles William Thompson, appears in the same Calendar for 1805, as Seventh Senior Optime. Notwithstanding this difference

of rank in the Cambridge list of honours, the Seventh Wrangler always spoke of his brother Charles as a man very superior to himself in ability.

Charles William Thompson was Travelling Bachelor of Queen's, and Lieutenant and Captain in the 1st Foot Guards. He was killed in action near Biarritz in the South of France on the 12th December, 1813. He was standing at the head of his company, who were kneeling and firing at a house occupied by the French, who were firing also. The serjeant of Captain Thompson's company suggested to his officer that he should also kneel. He did so, and immediately after a ball went through his brain. Lieutenant Thomas Perronet Thompson, "in the irresistible desire of seeing his face once more," says General C. W. Thompson in his Obituary Notice of his father—but, as stated in a letter which I have seen, part of the inducement was the desire of recovering a small bit of gold which he wore attached to a piece of ribbon—had him taken up a few days after and re-interred in the garden of the Mayor of Biarritz, where he rests with two other officers of the same regiment, over whose graves the owner of the garden has placed a stone with an appropriate French inscription.

General Perronet Thompson's father was averse to his eldest son's entering the Naval Service, and he made it a condition of his giving his consent that his son should first make a voyage in one of his ships from Hull to the Mediterranean. The youth accordingly made a voyage in a certain brig, which from the General's not unfrequently alluding to his first voyage in that brig was called by some of his children "the celebrated brig." The General's life had been a most adventurous one, and like the old Hetman of the Ukraine he might sometimes "track his seventy years of memory back." In regard to the "celebrated brig," one story I remember was that in the Adriatic they were on the point of being attacked by a pirate and had made the best preparations they could for resistance when something occurred—probably the appearance of an English ship of war—which made the pirates retreat.

I may add that if he, like other men after a life not only long but adventurous, had many memories of the past which he was apt to recall to himself and others, he told his stories or anecdotes with clearness, conciseness and point. One anecdote I will attempt to give from memory in the General's own words, the rather that a

person to whom he had told it gave it in a newspaper in a form which spoiled it. At one of Mr. Wilberforce's elections a body of his supporters had followed him to his own house, shouting "Wilberforce for ever." Seeing a young lady at one of the windows, they shouted "Miss Wilberforce for ever," to which she immediately replied—"God forbid! gentlemen, God forbid!" The report of this slight anecdote in the newspaper represented the young lady as making a speech to the "Worthy and Independent Electors" after the orthodox form of an Election Address before the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832; and is about as near truth as the stories told by the celebrated Mr. Pell of the Pickwick Papers, a practitioner in the London Insolvent Court, who represented himself as standing so high in the estimation of the Lord Chancellor, that his lordship said, "Mr. Pell, you are an honour to your profession—you could get any man through the Insolvent Debtors' Court."

Indeed the reporter of this anecdote in the newspaper, reminds one of a writer who professed to be acquainted with a certain attorney who has been supposed to be Mr. Pell of the Pickwick Papers, according to the description of Mr. Weller, senior,

who gives the following extract from Mr. Pell's conversation :—

“The late Lord Chancellor, gentlemen,” said Pell, “was very fond of me. . . . I remember dining with him on one occasion: *there was only us two*, but everything as splendid as if twenty people had been expected; the great seal on a dumb-waiter at his right hand, and a man in a bag-wig and suit of armour guarding the mace with a drawn sword and silk stockings, which is perpetually done, gentlemen, night and day.”

In 1803, after having when a youth under nineteen obtained the degree of Seventh Wrangler, he sailed as a midshipman in the “Isis,” of fifty guns, the flag-ship of Vice-Admiral Gambier, afterwards Lord Gambier. Being rather under the average height he nearly lost his life from having been unable to obtain the support intended to be given by the rope under the yard-arm from the outer extremity, of which he had to make his way—so that he said he was so exhausted that he thought he should have to let go his hold and drop into the sea. In the following year he was elected to a Fellowship at Queen's, “a sort of promotion,” he remarked, “which has not often gone along with the rank and dignity of a midshipman.” At Portsmouth in September, 1805, he saw Nelson embark

on board the "Victory," for Trafalgar, which closed the prospect of active service in the Navy. In 1806 he joined the "old 95th Rifles" as a second lieutenant. In the Spring of 1808 he was sent, at the age of twenty-five, as Governor to Sierra Leone, through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce, an early friend of his father's. During the eighteen months that Lieutenant Thompson was Governor of Sierra Leone he had fourteen fevers; and also had a narrow escape with his life from the claws of a panther that he kept as a pet—a sort of successor to a Greenland bear which he kept when a boy at Cattingham, his father's house between Hull and Beverley. As he related the incident to me, some one had given the panther the whole carcase of a kid with which the panther retired into the council-room which was unoccupied. The Governor went into the council-room and took the kid from the panther which did not make much resistance; but walked quietly two or three times round the room, and then suddenly sprung upon the Governor who had taken the carcase of the kid from it. After a struggle they came down together, and the Governor said he felt the claws of the panther upon his shins as if they were razors. Fortunately some persons came to his assistance,

and the panther was prevented from doing further mischief.

In 1811 he joined the 14th Light Dragoons in Spain as lieutenant, and was present at the actions of Nivelle, Nive, Orthes, and Toulouse, for which he received the Peninsular War-medal with four clasps. During the campaign of 1814, he was taken off regimental duty and attached to the staff of General (afterwards Sir Henry) Fane, of whose kindness and ability he preserved a grateful recollection. "Some old Dragoons, discharged on eightpence a day," he writes in a passage which I quote from an Obituary Notice of him written by his second son, General Charles William Thompson, and printed in the Obituary Notices of the Royal Society, No. 116, 1869, "may remember that he was a careful leader of a patrol, a good looker-out on piquet, could feel a retiring enemy, and carry off a sentry for proof, as well as another, a great hater of punishment, and a man of very small baggage, consisting of something like a spare shirt and an Arabic grammar."

Captain Thompson—he was promoted at the peace of 1814—exchanged into the 17th Light Dragoons serving in India. In 1819 he accompanied Sir William Grant Keir as Arabic interpreter

to the Expedition against the Wahabees of the Persian Gulf. When the main body of the Expedition returned to Bombay, he was left in charge of Râs al Khyma, with eleven hundred men, Sepoys with a detachment of European Artillery.

It was not the intention to introduce here any of the details of General Perronet Thompson's active career, except those connected with his exertions for the repeal of the Corn Laws. There is, however, one incident of his military life which may be glanced at as throwing some light on the late fighting in the Soudan. His son, General Charles William Thompson, in a letter to me dated 28th March, 1884, says:—

“The accounts of the late fighting in the Soudan, especially of Baker Pasha's defeat on 4th February, remind me strongly of my father's description of the way in which the Sepoys ‘ran like sheep,’ after firing their muskets in the air, and in many cases allowing the Arabs to drag them out of the ranks by their cross belts with one hand, and cut them down with the other—as if afraid of enraging them by resistance. I see that someone else has been struck by the resemblance, and has published a letter which I send, and which you can keep if you like, as I have another copy. It is fairly written and pretty correct, except a few mistakes which I have corrected in the margin, without altering the text.”

The letter referred to is headed by General

C. W. Thompson "15th March, 1884." The slip of printed paper containing the letter is headed "Letters to *The Standard*—A forgotten page of History." The letter commences thus — "C. R. Low, author of the 'History of the Indian Navy,' writes :—

"The British public appears surprised at the reckless gallantry of the Desert Arabs ; but the actions of El Teb and Tamati are not the first in which our troops have been engaged in close and deadly conflict with the Arab race. By a strange coincidence also it was the 1st York and Lancaster (then known as the 65th Regiment), that before took a prominent part in the sanguinary fighting."

In the following passage of the letter, I have availed myself of General C. W. Thompson's corrections which he has made in the margin, without altering the text. The letter as corrected thus proceeds :—

"In 1820, the Beni-Boo-Ali Arabs, who inhabit the country near Ras-ul-Had, in Arabia, having committed some excesses, a force of three hundred and twenty Bombay Sepoys, with four guns, manned by European Artillerymen, and about two thousand troops of the Imaum of Mascot, under command of Captain (the late General) Perronet Thompson, of the 17th Dragoons, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, landed on the Arabian coast and marched inland to inflict chastisement on the Arabs. On the 9th November, the opposing forces came

into conflict, and the Arabs broke into the British column wheeling into line, and a terrible scene of slaughter took place. Six out of eight officers engaged and two hundred and seventy men were slain, besides the loss suffered by the forces of the Imaum, who was himself wounded while endeavouring to save an Artilleryman, for which Act of gallantry the Governor-General of India presented his Highness with a magnificent sword. The Bombay Government speedily despatched an Expedition, under Sir Lionel Smith, consisting of one thousand seven hundred Sepoys and one thousand three hundred European soldiers, including the 65th Regiment, the 1st Bombay Fusiliers, a troop of Horse Artillery, and an Indian Naval Brigade, with guns. On the 10th February, 1821, the Arabs made a night attack on the British camp (similar to what was attempted, with ill success, on Wednesday last), in which our loss was one officer and sixteen men killed, and three officers, including Brigadier Cox, and twenty-three men wounded. On the 2nd March took place the decisive action, when the Arabs sought to repeat their tactics of charging the British square, broadsword and target in hand. But the 65th and 7th Native Infantry, forming the Right Brigade, on whom the main attack was directed, proved steady, and repelled the Arabs, who, out of less than one thousand warriors, left five hundred on the field, the British loss being twenty-nine killed and one hundred and seventy-three wounded."

Such is the account of this affair given by the author of the *History of the Indian Navy*. I will now give the account of General Perronet Thompson, with annotations by his son, General

Charles William Thompson, who was then a little boy, having been born in India, and can remember the Imâm with his hand in a sling on board ship afterwards.

A misunderstanding having arisen between the Bombay Government and the Arabs of Al Ashkarah on the coast of Omân, who had plundered certain boats, the former sent an order to Captain Thompson to act against them from Kishme in the event of their clearly appearing to be piratical, but to address a letter to them previously to any attack being made. This attempt at negotiation failing through the murder by the hostile tribe of the messenger bearing the letter, the injunction to communicate appeared to be fulfilled and answered. Military men will see the duty of acting with decision under these circumstances. Landing at Soor, on the Arabian coast, forty-six English miles from the town of the hostile tribe of Beni Bou Ali, Captain Thompson's small force of three hundred and twenty Sepoys and four guns was joined by the Imâm of Maskat with two thousand men of his own. The force of the enemy was reported to be nine hundred bearing arms. On the 9th of November, 1820, as the column was toiling through the sand, the hostile sheik, Mohammed Ben Ali,

advanced to the attack, sword in hand. What followed is best described in Captain Thompson's own words, written in a private letter the next day :—

“The Arabs made the guns the point of attack, and advanced upon them. The instant I heard a shot from the light troops, which showed the Arabs to be in motion, I ordered the Sepoys to charge with the bayonet. Not a man moved forward. I then ordered them to fire. They began a straggling and ineffectual fire, aided by the Artillery, the Arabs all the while advancing brandishing their swords. The Sepoys stood till the Arabs were within fifteen yards, when they turned and ran. I immediately galloped to the point where the Sepoys were least confused, and endeavoured to make them stand ; but they fired their muskets in the air and went off. The Imâm's army began a fire of matchlocks, and went off as soon as the Arabs approached. I rode to the Imâm and found him wounded. The people just ran like sheep. I saw some of the European Artillerymen and ran to endeavour to make them stand ; but they were too few to do anything.”

In the *mêlée* Captain Thompson was struck on the shoulder by a matchlock ball, which passed through coat and shirt, grazing the skin, as he used to say, “like the cut of a whip.” The remnants of the force were rallied at the town of Beni Bou Hassan, about three miles from the scene of action, and after repulsing a night attack, were led

back overland to Maskat by Captain Thompson in person, eight days after the fight.

There can be little doubt that the cause of Captain Thompson's defeat was the misbehaviour before the enemy of the officers and men under his command—though in the opinion of the court-martial—while he was “honourably acquitted” of the other charges—he was deserving of a reprimand for “having addressed an Official Report to Government, in which he unjustly, and without foundation, ascribed his defeat to the misbehaviour before the enemy of the officers and men under his command.”

I will not presume to offer any opinion of my own on the question, but I will give from the letter of 28th March, 1884, already quoted, the words of a veteran soldier, respecting this case of an English officer having to lead troops who, instead of, like the English troops, as Wellington said, getting a man out of a mistake if he made one, would get a man who had made no mistake into a disaster which nearly broke his heart at the time, and left traces for life on his mind and spirits. There is this difference between the Government of India of 1820, and the English Government of 1883-4, that the Government of India of 1820 left Captain



Perronet Thompson no option of engaging the Wahabees—Arabs of the Desert—with an army of Sepoys, while the English Government of 1883 left it to the option of Generals Hicks and Baker to engage the Soudan Arabs with an army of Egyptians who appear to be much lower in the scale of soldiers than Outram placed them. Napoleon used to say there were only two sorts of troops—good and bad. The Egyptians have proved themselves to belong to the latter category. Till lately little or nothing seems to have been known about them. The words I allude to are these:—

“I have often wondered what would have been the change (if any) in my father’s career if he had been successful at Beni Bou Ali, as he deserved, after all the pains he took, and the coolness and science with which he endeavoured to check the Arab attack—and would have done so if the wretched Sepoys had only stood. But when they turned and fled at the approach of the enemy the chance was lost as completely as when a fencer’s sword breaks in making a *tour de force*. I may be contradicted by the assertion that the Imâm’s troops in the field were not all natives of Maskat. If so, they were Arabs of a different breed from the Wahabees of Beni Bou Ali, who were a warlike and religious sect of Mahometan reformers, something like Cromwell’s party as opposed to the Royalists. It strikes me to be a mistake to call the natives of the Soudan ‘Arabs,’ who are, strictly speaking, natives of Arabia and not Africa. They may be

Mahometans or even Wahabees, but they are no more 'Arabs' than they are 'rebels,' though it suits the newspapers to call them so."

I was desirous of obtaining General C. W. Thompson's opinion respecting the difference observable between the Arabs of the desert and the natives of Maskat; and writing to him on the subject I received the letter, part of which I have already quoted; and the part of which I now quote seems to explain the apparent inconsistency. He says:—

"I think it will be found on inquiry that the natives of Maskat subject to the Imâm (from whom my mother and I met with much kindness and civility more than sixty years ago, both on shore and afloat) were, and probably are, a very different race from the Arabs and Wahabees of the desert—much more civilized, commercial, and peaceable than the latter; less rude, ferocious and bigoted, and less inclined to risk their own or their neighbours' lives in any quarrel, religious or political, whatever. A corps of two thousand of them led by the Imâm in person, and comparatively disciplined, were with my father at Beni Bou Ali on the 9th November, 1820, and although they did not run away like the Sepoys, and the Imâm displayed great gallantry in endeavouring to save a European Artilleryman, in doing which the Imâm was shot through the hand (I can remember him with his hand in a sling on board ship afterwards)—yet his Maskat troops showed no anxiety to retrieve the day, and many of the friendly sheikhs who had joined

them on the march began to drop off in a manner that enforced the retreat of the remainder, and the abandonment of the Expedition."

In 1822, his regiment being ordered home, Captain Thompson returned with his wife and child by the Red Sea, the Nile, Cairo and Alexandria, Italy, and France. More than a year was consumed in reaching England. In 1827 he was promoted to a majority in the 65th Regiment, then in Ireland, and in 1829 to an unattached lieutenant-colonelcy of Infantry. His subsequent promotions bore date — colonel, 1846; major-general, 1854; lieutenant-general, 1860; and general, 1868.

When General Thompson returned to England, he devoted his attention to Political Economy, and in 1826 published a work under the title of "An Exposition of Fallacies on Rent, Tithes," &c. This work he republished in 1827 under the title of "The True Theory of Rent," in opposition to Mr. Ricardo and others. This work will be found in the fourth volume (p. 399 *et seq.*) of General Thompson's writings, published in 1843 in six volumes, under the title of "Exercises, Political and Others. By Lieut.-Colonel T. Perronet Thompson."

John Stuart Mill who—though some have thought him inferior in mental power to his father, James Mill—certainly on some, indeed, on many, subjects saw farther than his father, showed his superiority in mental vision in this matter. The pamphlet of Colonel Thompson, above-mentioned, in the first edition was described as “An Exposition of Fallacies on Rent, Tithes, &c., in the form of a Review of Mr. Mill’s Elements of Political Economy.” Of course it will be understood that this is James Mill’s “Elements of Political Economy,” a very different book from John Stuart Mill’s “Principles of Political Economy.” I have seen James Mill come forward and shake hands with Colonel Thompson very heartily when they met in the house of a common friend. But James Mill, though his mind was both powerful and original, and conscientiously sought after truth, was impatient of contradiction, and might consider it a piece of presumption in Colonel Thompson to put forth a “*true theory*” in opposition to him and Ricardo, which title implicitly calls their theories false, and he differed from his son in some points very much. For James Mill might see where Thompson was wrong, but either did not see, or did not admit that he saw,

when he was right, whereas John Stuart Mill, while he shows wherein he considers the author of the pamphlet wrong, does him ample justice in the criticism of his "Catechism on the Corn Laws." It is in this quality of trying to do justice to all men, by patient investigation and incessant labour, that John Stuart Mill stands alone among all the men that have come under my observation in the course of my life.

John Stuart Mill, in an article on the Corn Laws, in the thirteenth number of *The Westminster Review*, which came out in January, 1827—the book named at the head of the article being the "Catechism on the Corn Laws," third edition, London, 1827—in the course of some remarks on the new proposal for the amendment of the Corn Laws, says:—

"Mr. Canning commenced his speech by declaring that the conflicting opinions did not differ so widely as was commonly supposed. He proceeded to explain himself by saying that no person advocated a perfectly free trade in corn; that the necessity of some protection to agriculture was universally acknowledged, and that the only question was how much. We respect Mr. Canning's honest intentions, and admire his eloquence; but really, when we find him uttering with a grave face the above assertion, we can neither give him credit for much knowledge of the subject, nor even for

much acquaintance with the commonest writings upon it. We will take upon ourselves to affirm that not only some, but almost all the writers against the Corn Laws, have advocated, and do advocate, a perfectly free trade in corn. From Adam Smith to the author of the tract which we have prefixed to this article, they have universally represented *any* tax on the necessities of life as among the most impolitic and injurious of all modes of taxation."

J. S. Mill thus proceeds:—

"We have thus far omitted to notice the little tract at the head of the present article, not because it was not highly deserving of our attention, but because we were desirous, in the first place, to express our sentiments on the subject of immediate interest, the present state of the corn question. The author (who signs himself T. Perronet Thompson*) has

* There is a long note to the article at this place from which it appears that when he wrote this article J. S. Mill knew nothing more of the author of the "Catechism on the Corn Laws" than was to be learnt from the signature at the end of the Preface, "T. Perronet Thompson, Queens' College, Cambridge."

The note is so important that I will quote here part of it, which explains that if political economists generally have possessed the qualities of vigour and lucidity of mind, it could not be said of them, as has been said of J. S. Mill, that "the vigour and lucidity of the understanding are mirrored in the style." The note runs thus:—

"Mr. Thompson has published another pamphlet, entitled 'An Exposition of Fallacies on Rent, Tithes,' &c., which has

given, after some prefatory matter, of which we do not think so highly as of the work itself, an enumeration of a hundred and sixty fallacies on the Corn Laws: or, to speak more accurately, ten or twelve fallacies exhibited in a hundred and sixty different shapes. Mr. Thompson is master of his subject, and has disposed of the fallacies with great philosophical accuracy, and considerable clearness, conciseness, and felicity of expression. As this mode of combating those Proteus-

recently been advertised under the title of 'The true Theory of Rent, in opposition to Mr. Ricardo and others.' This pamphlet appears to us a striking exemplification of the mistakes of an ingenious mind, more accustomed to think in solitude than to discuss, and compare its ideas with those of other men. Mr. Thompson does not perceive that his theory of *rent* differs from that of Mr. Ricardo only in the expression. . . . Mr. Thompson's opinions on *tithes* and other taxes on the land are indeed different from those of Mr. Ricardo. But if he will read Mr. Ricardo's work again carefully, he will perceive that his opinions on those topics are not corollaries from his doctrine of *rent*, but from a peculiar and altogether erroneous opinion on *profits*, which he conceives to be regulated, like wages, by the proportion between numbers and demand. We have not space to be more explicit, nor can we venture to refer any but the very laborious reader to Mr. Thompson's work; for, erroneous as we deem its conclusions, it is to the full as difficult of comprehension as it could be if it were the quintessence of pure reason. Nor is this to be ascribed to any defect in the author's style. On the contrary, our copious extracts from his 'Catechism on the Corn Laws' afford sufficient proof that he possesses

like fallacies, which are formidable less from their native strength than from the multiplicity of shapes in which they appear, seems to us to have peculiar advantages, we shall make room for the exposure of some of the most potent among these instruments of deception."

— The reviewer then devotes more than half-a-dozen pages to extracts from the "Catechism on the Corn Laws." It will be unnecessary to reproduce any of these extracts here, as they have been now for many years before the public. The reviewer concludes with observing that the "Catechism" had attracted the attention of Lord King, who had fought the battle of Free Trade in the House of Lords, and recommends it as a speculation worthy the attention of a bookseller to make a collection of all that Lord King has said on this subject in Parliament since it began to be dis-

an uncommon talent for explaining whatever he understands."

Colonel Thompson refers to this controversy in a letter published in the sixth volume of his "Exercises," p. 368, in which he mentions "the dispute whether rent *forms part of the price of corn*;" and says:—

"The main point of dispute with Mr. Ricardo and his followers is whether rent makes price, or price makes rent; and though attempts have been made to ridicule the distinction as one of words only, it diverges into marked hostility on the subject of tithes."

cussed in 1825, and print it in a pamphlet as a companion to the "Catechism on the Corn Laws."

The writers adds:—

"The exertions of Mr. Whitmore and of Lord Milton deserve no less praise; and their merit is enhanced by the disgraceful reception—disgraceful even in the eyes of indifferent spectators—which they have experienced from the House. But their country will weigh them and their opponents by a different standard, and will esteem and venerate them as deeply for having set at defiance the fury of the band of enraged monopolists by whom they have been insulted, as it would have despised them if they had stooped, with the vulgar herd of public men, to court the applause of those monopolists by the sacrifice of the best interests of their country."

The opinion of General Thompson appears to have been that the *cause* of rent was the limited quantity of land, and that the difference in the qualities of land was not the cause of rent, but only the *measure* of the difference in its amount; or, in short, the measure of its amount. If Malthus and Ricardo had been clear writers, a good deal of controversy on the subject might have been avoided. It is just that Colonel Thompson's own words should be quoted on this point. Colonel Thompson, in his paper on "Saint-Simonianism," in *The Westminster Review* for April, 1832, says:—

“Malthus and Ricardo are stated to have arrived at the conclusion ‘that the difference in the qualities of land permits a part of the produce of some land to be applied to other purposes than the maintenance of the cultivators.’ Passing over any error in this conclusion, whose ever it may be, which consists in representing the difference of qualities of land as the cause of the *existence* of rent, instead of being only the cause of the *differences* in its amount—they are blamed for coming hastily to the conclusion that rent should be at the disposal of the owner of the land. And here the debate must be cut short by coming at once to the question of utility, and asking whether *honest* rent is to be left in the hands of the owner of the land, or is to be given to a Saint-Simonian committee that wants to have the disposal of it.”

It is not altogether unimportant to bear in mind that M. Auguste Comte commenced his career in the manufacture of a new religion and pseudo-philosophy as a disciple of this Saint-Simonian scheme of government. Comte has been thought by some to have been more indebted to Saint-Simon for his speculations than he was disposed to admit. It is curious to me to look back on the impression made by Saint-Simon on General Perronet Thompson and by Comte on J. S. Mill. The latter modified very much his opinion of Comte, as is shown by comparing the later editions of his *Logic* with the first edition. Yet in his final estimate of Comte, Mill says, “We think M. Comte

as great as either of these philosophers (Descartes and Leibnitz), and hardly more extravagant."

General Thompson's "Letters of a Representative to his Constituents," during the sessions of 1836 and 1837, are a most valuable and at the same time picturesque record of the state of the question of the Corn Laws during the two years immediately preceding the year 1838, when Mr. Villiers made his first motion and his first speech on the Corn Laws.

In a letter dated 13, Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park, 1st August, 1835, to the Secretary of the Hull Reform Association, General (then Colonel) Thompson, who had been returned to Parliament for Hull on the 20th of June, 1835, by 1428 votes against 1423, says:—

"SIR,—As the only communication I have received from Hull since the abandonment of the petition against the election has been through the newspapers, I feel apprehensive that we may have been waiting for each other; and so proceed to put an end to it.

"On the subject of that petition and its consequences, I have no hesitation in stating my personal conviction that I have been laid down and robbed at the door of the House of Commons, with the single object of holding out an example of the punishment to be inflicted on an individual who is bold enough to allow himself to be returned to Parliament

by a majority of his fellow-townsmen. The smallness of our majority, in the first instance, was effected by subornation of perjury on the part of our opponents; for which I refer to the evidence before the Committee of the House. And they afterwards rendered it impossible that I should avoid the contest by advancing against me disreputable charges, of no one of which did they attempt any proof before the Committee. There are few terms of disgrace which public opinion would not justify me in applying to such conduct; but I choose, for conciseness, to comprehend them all by stamping each and every of the parties concerned with the elaborate infamy of robbing by means of charging with disreputable offences.

“As your representative, I take the opportunity to point out to the Hull Reform Association, and through it to every association of the same nature throughout the country, the insulting falsehood contained in asserting that you, or any other set of electors, have freedom of election. You are free to elect whom you please, under the understanding that he shall be mulcted in his personal property to any extent the adversaries may choose to effect by the expenditure of perhaps a much inferior sum of their own. To take the present case: here am I, a man of comparatively small property, and no means of increasing it,—one in fact who could just, consistently with prudence, produce the moderate sum necessary to defray the legitimate expenses of an election,—robbed of the provision of my children to the amount of, I suppose, several thousand pounds, by possibly a conspiracy of the richest and most powerful individuals in the kingdom,—men, for aught we know, not confined to the rank of members of the Commons House of Parliament, but extending upwards

to the very steps of the throne. For that the ostensible instruments are not the substantial ones is matter of public evidence and notoriety. And this is *your* freedom of election.

“But the inference I want to draw from the exposure of this falsehood is the practical inutility, in the existing state of the laws, of you or me or anybody attempting to arrive at political amelioration through the instrumentality of the House of Commons. Calculate, for example, how much the money and trouble which has been extracted from you and from me in the present attempt to obtain one vote in the House of Commons would have effected if applied in the way which was our natural channel,—the raising of that ‘pressure from without’ which is daily recommended to us by the terrors of our opponents. I do not advise you hastily to lay aside altogether the pursuit of improvement by the first and feeble mode, but I do advise you to make it entirely subordinate to that more politic and useful mode in which your natural strength lies, and to give no effort to the one, except what you have not the means or opportunity of applying to the other.

“It is scarcely necessary for me to say that the power lodged in a Committee of finding a petition ‘frivolous and vexatious,’ is no security against the recurrence of a case like ours. We had the option of expending perhaps ten thousand pounds more, for the chance that the Committee would give us a claim on, it may be, half that sum lodged as security.

“Trusting that we shall all learn from experience,

“I remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

T. PERRONET THOMPSON.

“13, *Hanover Terrace, Regent’s Park.*

“*August 1, 1835.*”

In the short biography of General Thomas Perronet Thompson by his son General Charles William Thompson, included among the Obituary Notices of the Proceedings of the Royal Society, No. 116, 1869, it is stated that Colonel Thompson "was, as he expressed it, 'laid down and robbed at the door of the House of Commons' to the amount of £4000 by a petition of which none of the charges were proved before the Committee."

There are some touches in Colonel Thompson's Letters to his Constituents that give a picture of the interior of the House of Commons. In a letter dated London, February 11, 1837, he says:—

"The debate on the Irish Municipal Corporations, which had been adjourned at twelve on Tuesday night, was resumed on Wednesday. . . . Sir Robert, in place of his usual argumentative manner, was boisterous and loud, and he indulged to excess in the not very agreeable habit of turning his back to the Speaker and the House, and in that position keeping the little boys on his own benches in a roar of

'Counterfeited glee

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he.'

"On the present occasion he quoted Tom Thumb and others of the classics with eminent success. The school-boys, in the House and out of it, will be the death of us."

As already remarked, since the question of the Corn Laws began to be discussed in Parliament in

1825, those who ventured to speak against the Corn Laws were assailed and insulted by the band of enraged monopolists who had so long revelled on the plunder of their country with all the fury of a band of robbers who had carried on their trade successfully and were threatened with resistance by some of their victims. In a letter to his constituents dated "London, March 18, 1837," General Thompson gives a description of the reception a motion for an alteration in the Corn Laws met with in the House of Commons in 1837 in the following words—and as Mr. Villiers made his first motion in the following year he might have a foretaste of what he was to expect:—

"On Thursday Mr. Clay brought on his motion for an alteration in the Corn Laws. As soon as Mr. Clay had finished speaking, an agricultural member (Mr. Cayley) rose with the seconder, and endeavoured to stop proceedings by counting out the House. The number was found above forty, and the seconder went on. Their first movement having thus failed, the landowners mustered kin and clan, and finally came down to the number of above two hundred. The ordinary routine of a thousand-times-answered fallacies was put forward, and received as might be expected in an assembly where every man had made an oath that he had a pecuniary interest in the question before him. At the instance of friends about me, I made repeated attempts to offer reply, as also to explain my reasons for not voting upon the actual

question, but was unable to obtain a hearing. Thank God! I have many better places. If I had been a jobber in a railroad or a dabbler in some monopoly, wishing to make a similar explanation, I should have been heard with reverential sympathy, to the extent that human organs could supply. Sir William Molesworth entered upon a demonstration of the mode of operation of the competition generated by the limitation of food, which was perfect in its way, but confined to a portion of the field. Mr. Hume was received with groans and hideous laughs when he attempted to open the case of that part of the community who have not three hundred pounds a year in land; and when he proceeded to connect the question with the new Poor Law, the sounds that issued from the landed benches had a touch of the New Zealander. If there is a horrible sound on earth, it is the laugh of two or three hundred aristocrats all sworn to a contrary interest, when an honest man presents himself before them to plead the cause of the industrious and the poor. And now I turn to the people of England—to that portion of them who do not believe that to swear to a pecuniary interest is the way to constitute a judge—to the portion who are born to work and to suffer, and not to receive rents and to spend,—a portion with whom I believe I possess some influence, from whom I enjoy some confidence, whom I have at all events endeavoured faithfully to serve, whose cause I have pleaded till the hair that was dark has turned grey, whose cause I would and could plead now, if we had a tribunal where physical force and sworn interest were not opposed to our having a hearing.

* * * *

“Mr. Hume’s speech is of great importance, because it

shows that he is come over to the people's side on the question of the Poor Laws as connected with the Corn Laws. Through living in the same part of the town, I have the 'privilege,' as some of our Hull friends would say, of coming home with him almost every night from the House of Commons, and it is not long since he in some sort rated me for my Poor Law heresies at Preston. The member for Middlesex is always right in the end, but he is not hasty in his conclusions. He is surrounded by numbers of *doctrinaires*, which only makes his escape to the popular side of more importance.

"Another point on which I am glad to find the member for Middlesex is confirming my preconceived opinions with the weight of his authority, is in believing that the abolition of the Corn Laws is the key to the whole of our enemies' position. Our oppressors are strong, because they contrive to live upon our resources; because, through the Corn Laws, they draw our wealth into the shape of rents, and make us pay for the hoof that tramples on us."

On April 22, 1837, he writes:—

"The House of Commons, as it at present exists, is an engine for securing the *minimum* of publicity and information which is compatible with the actual state of popular power. To give a single instance; there is no liberty of speech, except for a certain number of professional speech-makers. Heaven knows I have troubled nobody at any great length, but from the moment I entered the House of Commons I have been trampled on because I belonged to no *clique*."

He then mentions two questions respecting which he possessed special opportunities of knowledge,

and on which he attempted to say a few words, but his mouth was stopped, and he was not allowed to say a word. He then proceeds thus:—

“ Was it decent, again, according to the supposed rules of popular assemblies, that on the question of the Corn Laws, on which, if some do not know, others do, that I have bestowed a greater quantity of continuous labour than any other man in the House can show, and have something not unlike a tail in some parts of the country in consequence, I should not be allowed to say one word ? ”

I quote these passages as evidence of the state of things just one year before Mr. Villiers first brought forward the question of the Repeal of the Corn Laws in the House of Commons. I have said just one year, but I ought to have said about a month less than one year, for Colonel Thompson wrote what has been quoted on April 22, 1837, and Mr. Villier's first Motion on the Corn Law question was made March 15, 1838.

In reading General Thompson's Letters to his Constituents it is evident that he had not, in 1836 and 1837, gained the ear of the House; and indeed I doubt whether he ever gained the ear of the House, which amounts to the same thing as what he terms “ liberty of speech, there being no liberty of speech except for a certain number of professional

speech-makers." If these speech-makers were agreeable speakers the evil might be more endurable. But are they agreeable speakers? What he did for the Repeal of the Corn Laws was done by his "Catechism on the Corn Laws" and other writings, and by his speaking at public meetings in various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales, particularly in that journey with Mr. Cobden to the principal towns of Scotland, in reference to which the Earl of Dalhousie, who had known Colonel Thompson when he was in the House of Commons as Mr. Fox Maule, afterwards mentioned at a public meeting as a proof of his Liberal principles that he had gone to Glasgow to meet the apostles of Free Trade, Mr. Cobden and Colonel Thompson. Indeed many members of Parliament have obtained a hearing from their first speech to their last without possessing the knowledge or eloquence of some who have been refused a hearing, but who in time overcame the obstacles opposed to them and became leaders of parties whose words commanded attention. For some time after Mr. O'Connell entered the House of Commons he was received in such a manner that he said to a member from whom I heard it that he thought of giving up the attempt to obtain a hearing. I have also heard that the

hooting and roars of laughter with which Mr. Disraeli's first attempts at parliamentary oratory were received disheartened him to such a degree that he would have abandoned the attempt to speak in the House, had he not been dissuaded from such a course by a member of the House of some parliamentary experience. The individual alluded to, who related the circumstance to a friend of mine, said that one day he met Mr. Disraeli in the city accompanied by a lady, his wife, to whom he said: "Allow me to introduce you to this gentleman to whose advice I am indebted for my parliamentary career, since, but for his advice that I should not be disheartened, I should have abandoned the attempt of being a speaker in Parliament."

General Thompson seemed to have been much interested by his journey to Scotland as one of the Free Trade delegates. He often referred to it, and was fond of relating little anecdotes connected with it; or I should rather say relating some of the observations he had made in the course of his journey. It might be inferred too from some of the slight incidents he mentioned that in his addresses to the citizens of the Scotch towns with their Provosts and Bailies, he evinced a degree of

act that was well calculated to leave a favourable and friendly feeling in the audience towards those delegates of the Anti-Corn Law League, whom Lord Dalhousie went to Glasgow to meet, and designated the apostles of Free Trade.

One remark of General Thompson's I remember was the impression made on him as an old soldier by the appearance of the men he saw working on the roads. They looked, he said, like veteran soldiers—old Grenadiers—for they were, he said, tall, tough, wiry, weather-beaten men—just the sort of men to stand the wear and tear of a soldier's life. He added: "To judge from the appearance of those labourers working on the roads, I am inclined to think that the English must in the old time have had rather tough work in their fights with them, notwithstanding the general superiority of the English armour and horses."

General Thompson used to mention an expression made use of by a minister in a sermon he heard when on his Free Trade expedition in Scotland. The preacher used the words "a fund of righteousness," which furnished food or materials for thinking to General Thompson's acute and inquiring mind. Did the word "fund" mean a capital stock of "righteousness" on which the owner might draw as occasion might require? Had it some-

thing of the signification that might be attached to the word "grace" in the story—whether the story be truth or fiction—that has been told of Cromwell on his death-bed, that Cromwell asked one of his chaplains whether "it was possible to fall from grace?" The chaplain replied, "It is not possible." "Then," said the dying man, "I am safe, for I know I was in grace once." This, if accurately reported, seems to indicate that Cromwell was himself conscious that he had deviated from the path of honesty.

Neither General Thompson nor, as far as I know, any other member of that small party of politicians to which he belonged, would ever pay money for the votes of electors. General Thompson, after having declined to purchase one hundred votes at five pounds a vote, was defeated at Maidstone in 1837 by Mr. Disraeli. Mr. John Stuart Mill was defeated at Westminster in 1868 by Mr. W. H. Smith. In 1869 the Committee of the House of Commons which was sitting on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, recommended a provision prohibiting the use of rooms in public-houses; and Baron Martin, when his advice was asked by the Parliamentary Committee, said, "I have a very strong opinion indeed that the public-houses ought to be closed on the day of polling. I think the

quantity of drink on the day of polling, and the state in which many voters were alleged to have come up to vote, were perfectly scandalous ; they were so drunk in two or three cases that they did not know who they came to vote for." The three Judges appointed for the trial of election petitions all recommended an enactment that extravagant or unreasonable expenditure should vacate a seat. Mr. Justice Blackburn suggested that any expenditure exceeding five shillings a-head should for this purpose be declared unreasonable.

I have stated that Mr. John Stuart Mill, who like Colonel Thompson would not expend a farthing in bribery, was defeated in 1868 at Westminster, for which he had sat since 1865, by Mr. W. H. Smith. Baron Martin, one of the three Judges appointed for the trial of election petitions, when his advice was asked by the Parliamentary Committee on this point of expenditure at elections, said: "I think it well worthy of consideration whether there should not be an enactment that extravagant general expenditure, and I will limit it to that, should void the seat ; whether £7000 at Bradford,* or £9000 at Westminster, should not

* Baron Martin probably alludes to the election at Bradford ; at which election 158 rooms in public-houses were

of itself void the seat." This remark is the more important that Baron Martin was the Judge who tried the petition against the return of Mr. W. H. Smith for Westminster in 1868. But the Judges experienced great difficulty in cases of exceptionally large expenditure in obtaining proof of such infraction of law as would void a seat under the statute.

There was much evidence brought before the Committee of 1869 on the subject of drunkenness at elections. But the Committee, while declaring their opinion that the closing of public-houses at elections would tend to the tranquillity and purity of elections, expressed a fear that the public inconvenience arising from such a measure would be so great as to outweigh its advantages. But three

hired by one of the candidates. In such a proceeding there seems to be a cynical demonstration of contempt for all professions of political morality ; which reminds me of a case (before 1832) of a man who purchased a borough from Lord —. The man went down to his lordship's agent who said, "I have got all the electors at my house." The purchaser of the borough accompanied the agent to his house, in the yard of which a portion of the electors were lying about drunk. "These," said the agent, "are the men I can depend upon. The rest are locked up in the garden, enclosed by a wall sixteen feet high—all except three, whom Lord — has got hold of and shut up in prison."

members of the Committee, Mr. C. Villiers, Mr. Leatham, and Mr. Fawcett, opposed the passage in the Report of the Committee, which expressed a fear of public inconvenience. When the Committee made their report there were two days—the nomination day and the day of polling. The ballot has got rid of the nomination day, and the inconvenience from the closing of public-houses, if encountered, would now be reduced from two days to one day.

The Committee of the House of Commons, sitting in 1869, naturally sought to avail themselves of the knowledge and experience which the Judges had acquired in their election trial circuits. On the point of reduction of expenditure, Mr. C. Villiers asked the following question of Mr. Justice Willes :—"Ought you not to discourage as much as possible anything that is unnecessary in the way of expenditure?" "Undoubtedly," replied the Judge, "otherwise you give a rich dullard the advantage over a poor man of intellect."

This raises a nice question. I will quote in the next chapter some words of General Thompson, that "the world wants honest law-givers not pious ones;" and it may be added that an honest law-giver, though he may not be a brilliant genius,

is more desirable than a dishonest law-giver of great genius. Julius Cæsar was a poor man of intellect; and what did he, with all his genius and valour, do for the world? George Washington, having a competent estate, and if not a brilliant genius, a competent understanding, might be, as compared with Julius Cæsar, designated a "rich dullard." I should very much prefer a rich dullard of such kind to a poor man of intellect of the other kind.

There is a good deal of misconception on the subject of parliamentary seats. The importance formerly attached to a seat in Parliament, when a man's name at the corner of a letter gave the letter a sort of mysterious and sacred character over the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, made many persons incur expense and inconvenience to have the privilege of sitting with their hats on upon the green leather benches, and having the talismanic letters M.P. placed after their names on the covers of all letters addressed to them. There were also ambitious young men who might have discovered at school and college that they possessed that sort of ability which has received the name of parliamentary ability. Lord Macaulay says of Charles Montague:—

“It soon became clear that in the new order of things parliamentary ability must fetch a higher price than any other kind of ability; and he felt that in parliamentary ability he had no superior.”

“Parliamentary ability” does not here, I think, include the ability of a counsel in conducting a case before a Parliamentary Committee; and I think it might be shown that ability of a superior order in conducting a case before a Parliamentary Committee fetches at the present time, or at least it fetched a quarter of a century ago, a higher price than what is called parliamentary ability.

I had the honour, at the time of the Reform Bill of 1832, to be consulted by a Member of Parliament, who said he had been asked to recommend a candidate to a certain constituency, and he asked me if there was any of the men whom I knew as likely to meet the exigencies of the case. I was at that time a member of a debating society, where a short time before I had heard a man make what then appeared to me to be a very good speech. I recommended this man. The Member of Parliament did not seem to think he could recommend this man, seeing he had had a quarrel with him. With some trouble I overcame this difficulty, and the Member of Parliament went

down with the candidate and secured his election. Shortly after the same Member of Parliament applied to me again. I now applied to a friend of greater age and experience than myself, and he named a man as the "best parliamentary man" he knew. The Member of Parliament opened a correspondence with him. In the negotiation some hitch occurred which put a stop to it. It is instructive to note the result.

The man first referred to became an eminent and formidable parliamentary speaker and debater; but he entered Parliament a poor man, and he died a poor man, after a long parliamentary life. The second man referred to became the most eminent parliamentary counsel ever known and made a large fortune by the exercise of his profession. The extent of his fortune may be partly indicated by the fact that during the last year he practised at the (parliamentary) bar he made £37,000—thirty-seven thousand pounds.

It would appear from this that the ability exercised by this parliamentary counsel fetched a higher price than the ability strictly called parliamentary ability. At the same time in justice to many men who seek a seat in Parliament, it may be said that the money price of parliamentary ability is not

their only consideration. Of some men the money appetite may be as great as that of Charles Montague; of others it may be as small as that of the younger William Pitt. Charles Montague secured for himself as a place of refuge the Auditorship of the Exchequer. The younger William Pitt held in 1784 the same offices which Montague had held in 1698. Pitt was a much poorer man than Montague, and had at his own disposal a lucrative sinecure place. But Pitt gave away this place in such a way as to reward merit and relieve the country from a burden.

If the "rich dullard" should chance to be a man like the younger William Pitt, and the "poor man of intellect" a man like Charles Montague, the rich dullard is very much preferable as a member of Parliament to the poor man of intellect.

"In the intellectual qualities of a statesman, Montague was probably not inferior to Pitt. But the magnanimity, the dauntless courage, the contempt for riches and for baubles, to which, more than to any intellectual quality, Pitt owed his long ascendancy, were wanting to Montague."*

No professions of regard for the welfare of the people can be considered as of any value as long as those making such professions pay money for

* Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. iv., p. 279.

election purposes. And the same principle which forbids any payment of money for election purposes forbids also that the occupation of a member of Parliament should be taken up, like other professions, with a view chiefly to its pecuniary returns. J. S. Mill objects to the payment of members of Parliament on the ground that such payment—

“Would become an object of desire to adventurers of a low class; and six hundred and fifty-eight persons in possession, with ten or twenty times as many in expectancy, would be incessantly bidding to attract or retain the suffrages of the electors, by promising all things, honest or dishonest, possible or impossible, and rivalling each other in pandering to the meanest feelings and most ignorant prejudices of the vulgarest part of the crowd. . . . Such an institution would amount to offering six hundred and fifty-eight prizes for the most successful flatterer, the most adroit misleader of a body of his fellow-countrymen.”*

Among the letters published by General Thompson, in the sixth volume of his writings, will be found at page 389 a letter dated Blackheath, 2nd September, 1841, and addressed to Mr. James Sinclair, Secretary of the Charter Association, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in reply to General Thompson, to be one of the securities required for the

* J. S. Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government*, p. 210. London, 1861.

prosecution of the petition from Newcastle. General Thompson says:—

“The effect of the law of elections is in the first place to make the election dependent on the exercise of bribery and intimidation, and in the next, to provide a vindictive power capable of being used against those who shall appeal to the professed remedy.

“I do not speak on either of these points without some personal experience. In July, 1837, I stood for Maidstone. The night before the election, a hundred voters sent to my friends, and stated that they would vote for me for five pounds a-piece, and they should ask a Tory eight. I declined; and the consequence was, that on the poll I was one hundred and forty behind instead of sixty a-head, as would have been the case if I had accepted the offer. Not very long afterwards another election took place; and though the state of the borough was notoriously as has been described, yet when the Liberal party were unwise enough to make an appeal to the existing law, their appeal was declared by a hostile majority to be frivolous and vexatious, and the individuals who were the securities were subjected to loss, in the same manner that I feel assured would be applied to myself, if I was found in the same position.

“On the other point I have more recent experience still. It is within your knowledge that I stood at the election of 1841 for Hull. I suppose nobody will dream of denying that bribery, the most extensive and orderly, was practised on every side but ours.* The Whigs in fact began it as early as

* That is on every side but the Radical. The Radical

July, 1839; when they set on foot the plan of purchasing men their freedoms, on their written promise to vote as a named individual should direct; and the channels, the sums disbursed (three hundred sovereigns at the first swoop), were all matters of notoriety, and brought before the cognizance of a public meeting at the time. Of course it is not an occasion to be hard upon the Tories for following the example. Rightly does Sir Robert Peel say, 'There was something besides the Chandos clause that carried the election at Hull.' If he will come to Hull, we will show him to his heart's content. . . . And when we ask to have the strength of bribery and intimidation weakened by the Ballot, the Whigs tell us they will make it an open question, as the best means of putting it down; and the Tories call it our 'cowardly, mean, lying, hypocritical, sneaking, un-English, unmanly invention,' though all the time, the lords and honourable gentlemen who call the Ballot a 'cowardly, mean, lying, hypocritical, sneaking, un-English, unmanly invention,' are using it in their own

being the only party that does not practice bribery, some remarks of a Tory leader in Mid-Lothian, on September 15, 1884, are extraordinary. This Tory leader who, after a panegyric on fox-hunting, said that "what was true of the chase of the fox was also true of the chase of the Radical," may be reminded of the answer of John, Duke of Argyll, to Queen Caroline. Her Majesty in her displeasure at the execution of Porteous, said she would make Scotland a hunting-field. "In that case, Madam," answered the Duke, with a profound bow, "I will take leave of your Majesty, and go down to my own country to get my hounds ready."

associations, wherever they find it to be for their convenience.”*

General Thompson’s Political Letters — particularly those addressed to the Secretary of the Hull Reform Association, and one addressed to the Secretary of the Hull Working Men’s Association† remind me more of Swift’s “Drapier’s Letters” than any letters that I am acquainted with. Whether or not can be said of General Thompson what has recently been said of Swift with reference to the Drapers’, or as Swift chose to spell it Drapier’s, letters that they demonstrate his tact and sagacity as a political leader; they are free from the monstrous exaggeration and sophistry of Swift. They are also specimens of pure and idiomatic English, and of eloquence perfectly natural and unadorned—as natural as that of Mr. O’Connel, which I once heard an eminent member of Parliament describe as the sort of speaking which a man might address to his soldiers on the best practicable

* “Exercises, Political, and others.” By Lient.-Colonel T. Perronet Thompson, vol. vi., pp. 389, 390.

† This letter will be found at p. 312 of the fourth volume of General Thompson’s “Exercises, Political and others,” in which volume will be found also his “Letters of a Representative,” and his “Catechism on the Corn Laws.”

means of passing an unfordable river. There is one sentence which I will venture to transcribe from General Thompson's letter, dated London, 3rd February, 1838, to the Secretary of the Hull Working Men's Association:—

“I assume nothing but the same faculty of judging of consequences from appearances, that makes one of your sailors take in a top-gallant sail, when he sees the squall chasing him astern.”*

This sentence could not have been written, but by a man who had been a sailor as well as a soldier; as some of Erskine's best speeches could only have been spoken by a man who had been a sailor as well as a soldier.

In answer to the plea that the farmers were entitled to compensation for wet harvests, Colonel Thompson said that the farmers and owners of land are bound to make their reckonings on an average of seasons, and carry their cultivation of land just so far and no farther. “If they do not know how to do it,” he continued, “that is their business and not other people's. Suppose an underwriter was to make his calculations on all his ships coming home safe, and then was to run to the landed

* “Exercises, Political, and others.” By Lieut.-Colonel T. Perronet Thompson, in 6 vols., vol. iv., p. 315.

interest and say, 'By the act of Providence and a windy season, two out of ten of my ships have foundered at sea. Remunerate me out of your rents.' Just as good a joke is the claim of the agriculturalists to consideration for wet harvests."

In a subsequent chapter I shall have to touch on the question of the influence of Free Trade on foreign policy. Those who look only to a larger market for their manufactures are very apt to fall into traps, such as that of the Channel Tunnel—the trap of drawing a nation which nature has placed in an insular situation out of that advantageous position, and placing that nation on a level with the nations which had not that advantage, only to put money into the pockets of certain speculators who use the words "free trade" to serve their passion for speculation.

There is a passage in one of General Thompson's letters to his Constituents, dated London, 20th February, 1836, which bears on this question in some degree, and which I will quote as showing, or at least giving some indication that General Thompson would not have voted for a Channel Tunnel.

"Last night," he says—that is, 19th February, 1836—"there was a long debate on Russia, Poland, and Turkey, arising

out of a motion for papers by Lord Dudley Stuart. The House was very thin, and the proceedings languid on the whole. The Member for Birmingham (Mr. T. Attwood) was all for active measures; and his speech would have been received thirty years ago with immense applause as a specimen of the 'truly British spirit.' The ablest speech of the night was that of the Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), who was all for peace; but went, in my estimation, as much too far in one direction as the Member for Birmingham in the other. It really does not seem difficult to trace the proper line between the two, by a simple reference to the duties of private life. A man is not to go out 'colonelling' and run his head into scraps in search of remote wrongs and dubious grievances. But neither is he to sit at home in his veranda, with his hookah luxuriously before him, and hear the cries of 'murder' and the rest of the four* pleas of the Crown—contenting himself with what he calls his 'moral influence'—and trusting to the height of his garden wall. Nations, like individuals, are, within certain limits, bound by a common interest on this point of repressing injustice. If England luckily has a high garden wall, *or what is better, a deep fish-pond all around*, the inference is that England is bound to apply these advantages to the general good."

The words in italics show that General Perronet

* I have here substituted "four" for "five." General Thompson writes, "the rest of the five pleas of the Crown." I assume that he was thinking of Scott's "Old Mortality," chapter 25—where Scott's words are "running or screaming, division upon all those crimes which the lawyers call the four pleas of the Crown, namely, murder, fire, rape, and robbery."

Thompson, though a strenuous advocate of Free Trade, was not an advocate for destroying the advantages afforded to England by her being an island, and for promoting the rise of the dividends of a certain railway company by the sacrifice of all the advantages of England's insular situation. It is a hard fight against the rage for wealth which shuts out of view all other considerations but the gratification of its own *auri sacra fames*, which words may be translated *accursed hunger for gold*.

The reference to the duties of private life in the above quotation from General Thompson, reminds one of a reference by a celebrated writer to the conditions of private property in illustration of the English Constitution. That writer says :—

“The power of King, Lords, and Commons, is not an arbitrary power. They are the trustees, not the owners of the estate. The fee simple is in *us*. They cannot alienate. They cannot waste.”



CHAPTER III.

CHARLES PELHAM VILLIERS.

THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES PELHAM VILLIERS was born in London in 1802; the third son of the Hon. George Villiers, and Theresa, the only daughter of the first Lord Boringdon. His eldest brother, George Villiers, succeeded to the title of Earl of Clarendon, a title which passed out of the family of Hyde into that of Villiers in this way. Thomas Villiers, second son of the second Earl of Jersey, having married the eldest daughter of the third Earl of Essex of the family of Capel, by Jane Hyde, daughter and co-heir of the last Earl of Clarendon, of the family of Hyde, was created Baron Hyde of Hindon in 1756, and Earl of Clarendon in 1776.

There are reasons for saying a word or two about Mr. Villiers's family. In his speech at Colchester, July 8, 1843, Mr. Villiers stated that he bore no ill-will to the landed interest; that by

birth he was connected with the landed interest, and had no kind of connection whatever with manufactures.

There was in the beginning of the seventeenth century a family of the name of Villiers seated at Brookesley Hall, in Leicestershire, on an estate which had been in that family for four hundred years. Sir George Villiers, of Brookesley, was twice married. From his first marriage descended Edward Villiers, created Baron Villiers of Hoo, and Viscount Villiers of Dartford, both in the county of Kent, 20th March, 1691; and created Earl of the Island of Jersey, 13th October, 1697. From his second marriage descended George Villiers, created Viscount Villiers in 1616; Earl of Buckingham, 5th January, 1617; Marquis of Buckingham, 1st January, 1618; and Duke of Buckingham, 18th May, 1623.

The dates of the peerages of Edward Villiers, Earl of Jersey, compared with the dates of the peerages of the descendants of the second marriage of Sir George Villiers of Brookesley—namely, George Villiers, created Viscount Villiers, 1616, and Duke of Buckingham, 1623; John Villiers, created Viscount Purbeck, 1619; and Christopher Villiers, created Earl of Anglesey, 1623—show

that the peerages of the descendants of the second marriage, were all creations of James the First, whereas the peerages of Edward Villiers, Viscount Villiers, and Earl of Jersey, were creations of William the Third. The connection, indeed, of Charles Pelham Villiers with the English peerage is quite independent of the Duke of Buckingham branch of the Villiers family. I cannot say that there is no connection with any Stuart peerage since the peerages of Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and the peerage of Capel, Earl of Essex, were Stuart peerages.

It appears then that Charles Villiers, the advocate of the abolition of the bread-tax, was descended from an ancient and honourable English or Anglo-Norman family, and not from an upstart Court favourite of the times of the Stuarts. It is true that when the Government is monarchical, a Jack Ape can make any man a duke, and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, possessed the power of governing James I., as much as the Duchess of Marlborough possessed the power of governing Queen Anne. But even when the Government is what it was under James I. and Queen Anne, it is possible that the difference may be very great between the Court favourite of one reign and that of another.

The husband of the Duchess of Marlborough, who governed Queen Anne, possessed mental qualities of a very different order from those which Buckingham had possessed, a genius for politics not inferior to the genius of Richelieu, a genius for war not inferior to the genius of Turenne.

With the Princess Anne on the throne of England, Marlborough might look forward to a time when the armies of England would be commanded by a man with a genius for war very different from that of the Dutchman,—in whose case even the genius of Macaulay has been unable to disprove the maxim that without originality there is no greatness,—by a man whose memorable march into Germany, won the admiration of Napoleon Bonaparte, by whose order a "*Histoire de Jean Churchill, Duc de Marlborough*" (three volumes, octavo, Paris, 1808), was written in a fair spirit. The consummate skill with which the objects of the march into Germany, in 1704, were concealed from the enemy, until it was too late to prevent his real design on the Danube, has been reckoned by competent judges among the greatest achievements of military genius. The successes of Marlborough, too, were gained with an army in which the native British contingent did not exceed 20,000 men, and

three-fourths of which army were composed of Dutchmen, Hanoverians, Hessians, Danes, and Prussians ; and his plans were in almost every enterprise thwarted and marred by the timidity or obstinacy of the Dutch deputies.

The descendants of Sir George Villiers, of Brookesley, by his first wife, and the descendants of the same Sir George Villiers by his second wife, were kinsmen only of the half-blood. And by the old law of England, "the heir need not be the nearest kinsman absolutely, but only *sub modo* ; that is, he must be the nearest kinsman of the *whole*-blood ; for if there be a much nearer kinsman of the *half*-blood, a distant kinsman of the whole-blood shall be admitted, and the other entirely excluded ; nay, the estate shall escheat to the lord, sooner than the half-blood shall inherit.*

So that by the old law of England, the Duke of Buckingham, and the other children of Sir George Villiers of Brookesley by his second wife, could not have succeeded their half-brothers in the estate of Brookesley which remained in the line of the family of Villiers represented by Edward Villiers, created Earl of Jersey in 1697. The law of descent

* 2 Bl. Comm., 227.

has indeed been materially altered by the Stat. 3 and 4 Will. 4, c. 106 ; but though the half-blood is not excluded, it is enacted that a relation of the whole-blood, and his or her issue, shall be preferred to a relation of the same degree of the half-blood, and his or her issue.

The term half-blood appears from a passage in Shakspeare's *King Lear*, Act V., Scene 3, to have been used in a depreciatory sense. The term half-blooded is applied by the Duke of Albany to Edmund, the bastard son of the Earl of Gloucester.

“ *Alb.*—The let-alone lies not in your goodwill.

“ *Edm.*—Nor in thine, lord.

“ *Alb.*—Half-blooded fellow, yes.”

The descendants of the first marriage of the Leicestershire knight and the inheritor of the estate of Brookesley, might look upon their half-blood relations of the second marriage with a feeling the reverse of pride, notwithstanding the wealth and titles of honour they had received from a court of which it might be said, as has been said of the Roman Republic, its enmity might be dangerous, but its friendship was fatal—none ever escaped with life and honour from that deadly embrace.

The ancestor of Charles Pelham Villiers was raised to the peerage neither by the first, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth of those four persons bearing the name of Stewart or Stuart, whatever was their lineage—whether fiddler, lackey, king or nobleman,—who had borne the title of King of England for some fourscore years, and were of those of whom it has been said—

“Many a despot men miscall

“Crown’d and anointed from on high.”

Edward Villiers was created Viscount Villiers and Earl of Jersey by a King, under whom England resumed her old rank in Europe of a first-rate power, from which the Stuart dynasty had degraded her, to a second or a third-rate power. In the file of the Doges of Venice a black veil is painted over the place of Marino Faliero. The history of the Stuarts in England might be told by a black veil painted over their place in the file of the Kings of England.

The honour conferred on royalty by Robert Bruce, has been counter-balanced by the dishonour brought on it by those who called themselves Robert Bruce’s heirs—dishonour so great that a descendant of Robert Bruce might forego the great honour of such a descent to escape the ignominy

of any possible imputation of blood relationship to the son of Mary Stuart, who succeeded Elizabeth on the throne of England.

Hume tells us in his life that he devoted two years to his History of the Reigns of James I. and Charles I. He probably devoted more time to his Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding which contains the Section on Miracles. I am inclined to think that Hume might have found in James I. a subject for intellectual anatomy of a more interesting kind, than that James was only a jolly fellow, like James Boswell, who promoted a cheerful glass, "strongly inclined," says Hume, "to mirth and wine and sports of all kinds—he apprehended the Puritans' censure for his manner of life, free and disengaged. . . . In all history, it would be difficult to find a reign less illustrious, yet more unspotted and unblemished, than that of James in both kingdoms."*

* Hume's devotion to philosophical truth forms a curious contrast to his occasional deviation from historical truth. In the first section of his "Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding," Hume, after referring to the labour of the investigation, says, "we must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after; and must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterated." In the second page of the first chapter of his "Examination of Sir

And this is said of a man who truly or falsely has been accused of some of the most frightful crimes in all history. Besides the grossness of manners, amounting to filthiness, that lies on the surface, there is an ominous cloud made up in part of frightful crimes distinctly traced out, and in part of crimes still more frightful, remaining in shadow, which imparts to that court, and in some degree to that time, a strange, repulsive, pestilential air and aspect, hardly belonging in an equal degree to any other period of modern history. The wars of the Roses and the Tudor tyranny that followed and completely destroyed the warlike Anglo-Norman nobility rendered this possible, and permitted the protracted existence of a King on the throne of England, of whom the barons of the iron hand and the iron time would have made very short work.

William Hamilton's Philosophy," J. S. Mill says:—"England's thinkers are again beginning to see, what they had only temporarily forgotten, that a true Psychology is the indispensable scientific basis of Morals, of Politics, of the science and art of Education; that the difficulties of Metaphysics lie at the root of all science; that those difficulties can only be quieted by being resolved, and that until they are resolved positively whenever possible, but at any rate negatively, we are never assured that any human knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundations."

But if Hume and those who, like Isaac Disraeli and Mr. Gifford, have taken a view similar to his, that the unfavourable opinion of James I. is a re-echo of the yell of the Nonconformists of James's time, had ever read Clarendon carefully, they might have seen cause for grave reflection on the significance of Clarendon's guarded disclosures respecting the court of James. Clarendon has displayed great ability both in what he has told and in what he has left untold. Those who impute this to a fondness for mystery, forget that Clarendon's History and his Life, taken together, may be truly viewed as an elaborate defence of the Stuarts, conducted in a manner very creditable to Clarendon's skill as an advocate. The case resembled those cases in which the characters of "personages" are involved, and in which the most consummate advocates at the bar are retained with the highest fees. The fee which Clarendon ultimately received was a large one; but it was earned by the tact and adroitness of the advocate in marshalling the strong points of his case and keeping the weak points out of sight.

What a strange story for instance, is half revealed, half kept in sombre shadow, in his History, taken together with what he lets out in his Life,

of the habits and character of Sir Edward Sackville, Earl of Dorset, and of his own means of obtaining an intimate knowledge of them; of his having, when a young man in the Temple, spent much time "in the eating hours with the Earl of Dorset, the Lord Conway, and the Lord Lumley, men who excelled in gratifying their appetites;" of Dorset's "person, beautiful and graceful and vigorous;" of his wit and learning such "that he could not miscarry in the world." Lord Clarendon then glances at the unrestrained scope Dorset gave to his sensual appetites at that season of life—in the latter years of James I.—when the court of England presented a scene, such as could only be paralleled by the court of Henry III. of France. Clarendon then alludes to the duel in which the Earl of Dorset killed the Lord Bruce under the walls of Antwerp, "upon a subject very unwarrantable." It could not have been under such a King as Hume has described James in the words above quoted, that the men lived to whom Clarendon referred when he said that when he looked back to those days of his own early life, when he herded with such associates, that he had much more cause to be terrified upon the reflection than the man had who viewed in the morning Rochester Bridge, which he

had galloped over in the night, and saw that it was broken.*

Such might have been the reflections of many a man who survived to die quietly in his bed after having come in contact even in the slightest degree with that court. But it is to be borne in mind that Clarendon, though he could not always repress his natural feelings, wrote his History, in the character of counsel at the bar of the world for the family on which the royal power in England had been settled for far the greater part of the seventeenth century. When we read therefore Clarendon's characters of the Stuarts, we must bear in mind that we are reading the discourse, however able, adroit, and even subtle in its analysis of human character, of the avowed advocate of the Stuarts before the tribunal of posterity.

I am willing to take one case on which to try this question; and that one case shall be the tragedy of Gowrie House, Perth, which King James called the Gowrie Conspiracy. If the champions of King James can prove the truth of the royal version of that strange story they will have achieved a feat of no slight difficulty.

* Clarendon, Hist., i., 106, 107, Oxford, 1826. Clarendon, Life, i., 75, Oxford, 1827.

Having examined the whole of the evidence bearing on the tragedy of Gowrie House ; having carefully perused the depositions of the witnesses, the letters alleged to have been written by Logan to the Ruthvens, and which I have proved to be forgeries executed seven or eight years after the event to which they refer, and all the papers relating to the matter ; having most anxiously sought to arrive at the truth by a careful examination and comparison of all the various parts of which the evidence consists, in order to learn how firmly or how loosely, how coherently or how incoherently it hangs together, I have arrived at the conclusion that the assertion of the existence of the alleged conspiracy on the part of the two murdered boys, the Earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander Ruthven, is based only on a vast fabric of circumstantial falsehood, propped up by perjury, torture, forgery, and murder.*

Among the reviews of Essay V. of my "Essays on Historical Truth," was one in *The Scotsman*

* The examination of the Gowrie tragedy forms the bulk of Essay V. of my "Essays on Historical Truth" (London: Longmans and Co., 1871). The book should have been entitled—"An Inquiry into the credibility of some portion of English and Scottish History."

of December 26, 1871, the writer of which, who had devoted more than ordinary attention to the question of the Gowrie Conspiracy, says:—

“The question of the genuineness or spuriousness of the Logan Letters may be considered the crucial test of the truth or falsehood of the Gowrie Conspiracy.”

I am willing to accept this test; and I say, that if the letters had been then in existence they would have been produced at the trial of Sprot. My opinion is that they were fabricated in the interval between the trial of Sprot and the trial of Logan's bones. At the same time I admit that my reviewer—who says “we have subjected the letters to a very searching examination, on which we entered with strong misgivings about their genuineness”—has some advantages over me in having “had the opportunity of comparison with three undoubted signatures of Logan—one of them appended to a document in Lord Napier's possession; the other two occurring in the Public Records;” and the further, he says, “we pushed our investigation, the more did our suspicions disappear, till the evidence of genuineness became so overwhelming that we could no longer resist it.”

On this it is necessary to remark that the

reviewer appears to attach an undue or unwarranted authority to what has been termed the evidence of handwriting; and, like Mr. Pitcairn, Lord Dover, and Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler, to ground his conclusions chiefly upon the assumption of the authenticity of Logan's handwriting. The cases that have come before the English courts show that, as Mr. Justice Coleridge said, in the case of *Smyth v. Smyth and others*, tried at the Gloucester Assizes in August, 1853, "The identity of handwriting is very much a matter of opinion, and anybody might be deceived in a matter of evidence like that."

It is, indeed, a rule of English law that evidence of handwriting based on the comparison between the handwriting of a party to a document and other documents proved or assumed to be his handwriting, as well as evidence of handwriting by knowledge acquired from specimens, is not receivable.* Among the cases collected by Mr. Best, there are two which strikingly show the deceptive

* See Best on Presumptions of Law and Fact, p. 221 *et seq.*, and the cases there collected (London: S. Sweet, Chancery Lane, 1844).

nature of this kind of evidence. The first is related by Lord Eldon. A deed was produced at a trial, purporting to be attested by two witnesses, one of whom was Lord Eldon.* The genuineness of the document was strongly attacked; but the solicitor for the party setting it up, who was a most respectable man, had every confidence in the attesting witnesses, and had in particular compared the signature of Lord Eldon to the document with that of several pleadings signed by him. Lord Eldon had never attested a deed in his life.

This case it will be observed is precisely similar to the case of the reviewer stated above, comparing the signature attached, to what I maintain are the forged documents called the Logan Letters, with three undoubted signatures of Logan.

The other remarkable case occurred in Scotland, where on a trial for forgery of some bank-notes, one of the banker's clerks, whose name was on a forged note, swore distinctly that it was his signature, while to another which was really his, he spoke with hesitation. "Standing alone," says Mr. Best, "any of the modes of proof of hand-

* In the case of *Engleton v. Kingston*, 8 Ves. jun. 476.

writing by resemblance are worth little—in a criminal case, nothing.”*

One of the Logan letters which was alleged to have been written in July, 1600, specifies “extirpating of our names” as a necessary consequence of treason; whereas the abolition of a surname—a family or clan name—was introduced in November, 1600, by special parliamentary enactment in the case of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother. The recurrence of such a proceeding in 1603, in the case of the Clan Gregor, would be apt to make a person writing the Logan letters in 1608 forget that the extirpating a family or clan name was not a matter of course, and even forget that in July, 1600, it was unprecedented.

The writer of these letters never names any conspirator but the Earl of Gowrie and “M. A. R.” [Mr. Alexander Ruthven], sometimes “Mr. A. his lo-brother,” and in letter fourth to the Earl of Gowrie “M. A. your lo-brother.” The letters, five in number, are all professedly written by Logan. The first, third, and fifth letters are “to” and all commence with the words “Right

* Best on Presumptions of Law and Fact, p. 233.

Honorable Sir." If we take the proportion of letters to this "Right Honorable" phantom, as a measure of the proportion of weight which he bore in the alleged conspiracy, we find that he bore to the Earl of Gowrie the proportion of three to one, and to Alexander Ruthven, the Earl of Gowrie's brother, the proportion of three to nothing. It appears from this that the King and his ministers in 1608, had altogether abandoned the course of proceeding they had followed in 1600, which was to assert that Gowrie was too cautious to have any accomplices in his alleged designs. Finding that their former device had obtained no credit, they now tried another device to make the "story hang more handsomely together;" and from representing Gowrie as a person of the greatest caution, represent him as so incautious and rash as to put his life and fortune in the power of a drunken debauchee, by a compact which was to deprive him of his valuable estate of Dirleton. And how came it to pass that this "right honorable" phantom, who according to the Logan letters hypothesis was the head and front of the alleged conspiracy, should altogether vanish, while the royal wrath is wreaked on the house of Gowrie?

That was the age of jugglers, and this story called the Gowrie Conspiracy presents some examples. The name of Spottiswood, who was then Archbishop of Glasgow, stands third in the list of those who sat upon the trial of George Sprot, the notary, from whose repositories the Logan letters were professed to have been produced. Spottiswood was also one of those who were on the scaffold at Sprot's execution, and his name stands first in the list of those who subscribed Sprot's final deposition there made.

“ ‘A little before the execution,’ Calderwood says,* ‘when Mr. John Spotswood, bishop of Glasgow, said to Mr. Patrick Galloway, “I am afraid this man make us all ashamed,” Mr. Patrick answered, “Let alone, my lord, I shall warrant him ;” and indeed he had the most part of the speech to himself upon the scaffold.’ Well may Mr. Napier say, ‘Had the treasonable letters been produced on Sprot's trial, or even one well-authenticated letter, there would have been little reason for the courtly bishop expressing his fear that the wretched man on the scaffold would ‘make us all ashamed.’ This fact shakes the credit of this criminal process and the farce that followed to the very foundation.”†

* Cited in Mr. Mark Napier's note to Spottiswood's Hist., vol. iii., p. 277.

† Note, Ibid., p. 277.

Spottiswood distinctly confirms what has been stated from the records, that *no letter was produced* at Sprot's trial. In his History, after saying that Sprot had deponed—

“That he knew Robert Logan of Restalrig, who was dead two years before, to have been privy to Gowrie's conspiracy, and that he understood so much by *a letter* [not letters] that fell in his hand, written by Restalrig to Gowrie, bearing that he would take part with him in the revenge of his father's death, and that his best course should be to bring the King by sea to Fast Castle, where he might be safely kept till advertisement came from those with whom the Earl kept intelligence,”—

He adds the following sentence:—

“It seemed a very fiction, and to be a mere conceit of the man's own brain; *for neither did he show the letter*, nor could any wise man think that Gowrie, who went about that treason so secretly, would have communicated the matter with such a man as this Restalrig was known to be.”*

King James was a tough morsel for courtly writers such as Archbishop Spottiswood and Sir Walter Scott. Spottiswood settles the matter by

* The History of the Church of Scotland, by John Spottiswood, Archbishop of St. Andrew's, vol. iii., pp. 199, 200 (Bannatyne Club Edition, Edinburgh, 1850).

quoting an epitaph on James setting forth that Kings are not men but gods—

“ Princes are gods, O do not then
Rake in their graves to prove them men.”

Sir Walter Scott and Calderwood give very conflicting statements of Sprot's execution, the former saying that Sprot asserted to the last that the letters were genuine, and that being desired to give a sign of the truth of his confession, after he was thrown off the ladder he clapped his hands three times. Such is Scott's account of what Calderwood represents as the trick by which Dunbar, James's Prime Minister for Scotland, whose place was no sinecure when he had to attend executions as assistant-hangman, gave a sign when Sprot's dying speech should be interrupted by his being cast off the ladder so as to give to his words a sense the reverse of that which they seemed intended to convey.*

* Calderwood says, “ The people wondered wherefore Dunbar should attend upon the execution of such a mean man; and surmised, that it was only to give a sign when his speech should be interrupted, and when he was to be cast over the ladder ” (Calderwood: printed by the Wodrow Society, vol. vi., p. 780).

One more question I would ask: Why were no letters of the Ruthvens produced? If there had even been any letters from the Ruthvens, those letters would have been more likely to be preserved than the letters alleged to be found in the custody of those who had been connected with Logan.

“In this way it is in the power of any man—by writing letters referring to an enterprise of a treasonable nature, and keeping the letters in his own custody—to make circumstantial evidence of criminality in any shape against any other man.”*

In this case, however, the letters were written not by Robert Logan, but by those who were far more powerful than Robert Logan.

I have said that the letters were alleged to have been found in the custody of those who had been connected with Logan. Robert Logan, laird of Restalrig, died in the month of July, 1606; and the state in which he left his property at the time of his death throws some curious light on the selection of him as a candidate for the honour of being associated with the Ruthvens, in what King James denominated “the Gowrie Conspiracy.” It

* Bentham's *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, vol. iii., pp. 43, 44.

appears that the Earl of Dunbar, Prime Minister of Scotland, and Lord Balmerinoch, Secretary of State, had engaged in money transactions to a great amount with Logan, and were deeply indebted to his estate.

"From the record of the Great Seal it appears," says Mr. Mark Napier, "that in the year 1605, Logan's estate of Restalrig had passed into the hands of Balmerinoch by purchase. *But the purchase money had not been paid*; and when the laird of Restalrig died, the Secretary was in his debt no less than *eighteen thousand marks*,* a large sum in those days. This is proved by the register of confirmed testaments, where Logan's is recorded; and by the same it appears that the Earl of Dunbar was also Logan's debtor to the amount of fifteen thousand marks."†

It further appears by extracts from the Register of the Privy Seal, also furnished to Mr. Mark Napier by Mr. David Laing, that George, Earl of Dunbar, obtained from the King "the gift of the escheit and ferfaultour of the sowme of fyftene thousand markis Scotis money," remaining unpaid by him to the late Robert Logan of Restalrig, for

* A mark is 13s 4d.

† Mr. Mark Napier's note in the Bannatyne Club Edition of Spottiswood's History, vol. iii., p. 298.

completing the sum of thirty-eight thousand marks agreed on for the lands of Flemyng-town. There is also a grant to Alexander Home of Renton, the Earl of Dunbar's cousin-german, of certain leases and titles that had belonged to the late Robert Logan of Restalrig.

King James destroyed a good deal of documentary evidence relating to the deaths of Prince Henry and Sir Thomas Overbury, but the Gowrie business was a job too tough for him, even with the help of such faithful coadjutors as the Earl of Dunbar and Lord Balmerinoch, who were dangerous men to sell estates to in those days, when Scotland had the felicity to be ruled by the sixth James Stuart.

For the accomplishment of their own and their royal master's purpose this Prime Minister Dunbar, and this Secretary of State Balmerinoch, fixed upon a certain notary named George Sprot. This Sprot had the character of being very expert in imitating handwriting, and was made use of by the Earl of Dunbar, to be an agent in his scheme of making his Majesty's story of his adventures at Gowrie House "hang more handsomely together;"* being partly

* These are the words of a MS. letter in the State Paper

bribed by promises of benefit to his wife and children, partly tortured into his statement as to Logan's correspondence with the Ruthvens. But this addition to the original story instead of confirming it proves its falsehood.

As to the character attributed to the laird of Restalrig, who was so unfortunate as to be a man of considerable landed property in Scotland, when no man's landed property was safe under a King whose favourites might take any man's property which they took a fancy to, the words "ane godless, drunken deboschit man in his tyme,"† describe the character exactly of a man whom Hume has white-washed into an angel of light, and who according to Bacon, throughout the inquiries respecting Overbury's murder "had shown to the world, as if it were written in a sunbeam, that he was the Lieutenant of Him with whom there is no respect

Office, from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, dated London, Nov. 11, 1608. These words are very significant as showing the general, one might say the universal, opinion at that time in England, and even in James's court, respecting the Gowrie story.

† Wodrow MSS. in the Advocates' Library, cited Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, vol. ii., p. 275.

of persons.” Possibly Logan has been blackened as much as the other has been whitened; and if Hume were to have tried his brush upon him he might have come out as a jolly good fellow, “strongly inclined to mirth and wine—though he *apprehended** the Puritans’ censure for his manner of life, free and disengaged.”

The strange tragedy of Gowrie House was a story dark and terrible as that of Ugolino. The Torre della fame of Pisa did not witness a crime more horrible, more revolting, or more deserving of a terrible retribution than that perpetrated in the Black Turnpike in that old tower of Gowrie House at Perth. King James professed to take the “redacting noble houses, and men and women of noble blood, to slavish offices,”* to be one of his prerogatives granted by Holy Writ. James’s practice was quite consonant with what Tacitus calls the *mos regius*, in reference to the Emperor Tiberius. And with such a King as this James

* Johnson gives four meanings of the word apprehend, the fourth is probably the meaning used here “to think on with terror; to fear.” Then what does Hume mean by “free and disengaged”?

† King James’s Works, p. 199, folio, 1616.

Stuart, possessed of power to perpetrate with impunity crimes such as the murder* of Alexander Ruthven and his brother the Earl of Gowrie, of whom it has been said :—

“Unhappy boys ! to perish by such a fate, and to leave behind them, though perishing so young, a blackened memory !

quia nee fato, meritâ nee morte peribant ;
Sed miseri aute diem.”†

The English and Scottish nobility were in as bad a condition as the Roman nobility during the latter years of Tiberius, when that monster had retired to hide himself and his crimes amid the rocks of Capreæ ; and sent forth his emissaries to select his victims from the noblest houses of Rome, with power to employ force if necessary to effect their purpose.

* Sir Walter Scott, not content with turning King James's romance, called “The Gowrie Conspiracy,” into history, has characterized the basest and most cowardly act of a life of cowardice and baseness, as one in which King James “showed the spirit of his ancestors” (“The Fortunes of Nigel,” chapter v.). Which of his ancestors ? Robert Bruce or Signior Davie ?

† “Essays on Historical Truth,” p. 213 (London: Longmans and Co., 1871).

Hume, in his History of the Reign of James I., refers to an anecdote related in the preface to Waller's works. Hume's manner of telling this anecdote shows how little he knew of what he was writing about. Hume says : " When Waller was young, he had the curiosity to go to Court ; and he stood in the circle and saw James dine ; where, among other company, there *sat sat at table* two bishops, Neile and Andrews." The words in the work referred to are not "*sat at table*," but "*stood behind his Majesty's chair*." Hume seems to have altered the words of his authority to suit his own view of his Majesty and his Majesty's Court. I cannot say on what particular occasion a subject was first admitted to the honour of *sitting at dinner* with a king or queen of England, but from the day when Bishops Neile and Andrews stood behind the chair of James I. to the day when William Fitz-Osborne, Earl of Hereford, who as dapifer or steward of the royal household, had the charge of the King's table, served William I. with the flesh of a crane only half roasted, and the King became so angry that he lifted up his fist and would have struck Fitz-Osborne, had not his half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, warded off the blow, no subject, however high in rank, was

admitted to the honour of sitting at dinner with the King or Queen of England.

It is somewhat difficult to place before the mind manners and customs differing very much from those we have been used to; and it may seem strange to persons living in the nineteenth century as it might seem strange to Hume in the eighteenth century, that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the person who had the charge of seeing that the royal dinner was not served up half roasted held an office which made him the most powerful man in the kingdom after the King. He was not only at the head of the King's palace, but of all the departments of the State, civil and military, chief administrator of justice, and leader of the armies in war. Madox is in error when he says ("Hist. Excheq.," p. 28), that in the reign of William I., William Fitz-Osborne was the King's Constable, because he is called *Magister Militum*; whereas in the very same passage (of "*Orclericus Vitalis*") he is called *Normaniæ Dapifer*, in virtue of which office he would be *magister militum* as well as *capitalis justitiarius*. The constable was not originally *magister militum*, but was an officer subordinate to the *senescallus* or *dapifer*.

Some English lawyers have assumed that the

power of the officer created *pro hac vice* to preside in the House of Lords at State Trials grew out of those of the Chief Justiciary. If that view were correct, the functionary so appointed would have been styled "high justiciary," whereas he is styled "lord high steward"—that is, *senescallus Angliæ*, and he exercises powers which had been delegated to the high justiciary from the *senescallus Angliæ*, to whom they were restored *pro hac vice* in the person of the lord high steward.*

For some twenty years this King had governed Scotland with a rule as absolute and much more

* Professor Stubbs is, as far as I know, the only writer, legal or historical, who has come to the same conclusion which I have come to as to the origin of the English Justiciarship. In the first volume of his *Constitutional History*, p. 346, he says:—"It would seem most probable that William Fitz-Osborne at least was left in his character of steward, and that the Norman seneschalship was thus the origin of the English justiciarship." Professor Stubbs's first volume was published in 1874. In July, 1838, I published in *The British and Foreign Review* an article which John Kemble, the editor of that Review, whom both Professor Stubbs and Mr. E. A. Freeman cite as an authority in English history, said had a historical value. That article gave an explanation of the functions of the seneschal or dapifer and their relation to those of the Chief Justiciary.

intolerable than that of the Black Douglas three hundred years before. But how different were the rulers ! In the one case the ruler was a veteran soldier covered with honourable wounds received in fighting against fearful odds, to preserve his country's independence. In the other it was a man who bore the same relation to the warlike ruler of former days that Appius Claudius did to Marcus Furius Camillus—the relation of a maker of speeches to a winner of battles. The words in one of Lord Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome" describe well the relation to which I have referred :—

“ Still Caius of Coriali, his triumphs and his wrongs,
His vengeance and his mercy, live in our camp-fire songs.
Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have Gaul and Tuscan
bowed ;
And Rome may bear the pride of him of whom herself is
proud.

A Cossus, like a wild cat, springs ever at the face ;
A Fabius rushes like a bear against the shouting chase.
The Claudian triumphs all were won within the city-
towers ;
The Claudian yoke was never pressed on any necks but
ours.”

If this King's days were evil in Scotland, they were not less so when he became King of England,

When England had the grievous misfortune to have thrust upon her for a king, a man whose history is written in the history of the deaths of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander Ruthven, of Prince Henry, and of Sir Thomas Overbury.

In an examination of the evidence, which escaped the destruction by which the powerful seek to efface all traces of some of their deeds, respecting the death of Prince Henry, I used these words:—

“It is one of the privileges of absolute power to efface, when it desires, all traces of its footsteps.”

And the words immediately preceding are:—

“It is only within the last few years, and more than two centuries after the event, that any glimpse of the truth respecting the fate of Overbury has been obtained; all that was before made public having been carefully prepared and arranged by some of the subtlest legal intellects of their own or any time to raise a false issue.”*

With that man's name are linked the rumours of deeds so revolting, that they suggest the words

* “Essays on Historical Truth,” p. 363. Essay Seventh, *Prince Henry*. (See also Essay Eighth, *Sir Thomas Overbury*; and Essay Fifth, *Sir Walter Scott*.)

which in a tragedy of that time a veteran general applies to his sister whom a royal libertine had dishonoured :—

“ 'Tis, to be thy brother,
An infamy below the sin of coward.”

James I. had as great a horror of war as the gentlemen of the Peace Society. Being nearly despotic he had been able to put in practice his peace-at-any-price doctrines so successfully, both in avoiding war and in breaking the once high spirit of the English people, that the ambassadors of foreign powers resident in England repeatedly expressed their astonishment that the English nation submitted to such disgrace and oppression—calling it cowardice in the English people, some of them even going so far as to say that there were no men in England. England had, in fact, in this disgraceful reign sunk so low that her ambassadors were repeatedly insulted at foreign courts, her merchant ships could not sail the sea in safety, and her coasts were ravaged by the Barbary pirates, who plundered the villages and carried off many hundreds of the inhabitants into slavery.

No man ever engaged in the court intrigues of that king's reign and escaped with life and honour; and no man of average knowledge and capacity

ever attempted to write the history of that reign and escaped without finding himself involved in a subject unsuited to an age in which Sporus and Locusta cannot be brought upon the scene. I do not dispute Hume's capacity, and as to his knowledge he knew enough to know that in the matter called the Gowrie Conspiracy there were pitfalls which even his dexterity might not enable him to escape, and therefore he avoided all mention of it. But though this might show prudence what did it say as to his love of truth? His account of the reign of James I. will remain a memorial of his extraordinary interpretation of the meaning of the word *duty* applied to a historian.

It can be shown that the first Lord Hyde of the name of Villiers was a man possessed of qualities very different from those of the unhappy minion of court favour who died by the knife of Felton, or of his brilliant and dissolute son who died at Helmsley, after having wasted some of the choicest gifts of nature and of fortune. The great estate of Helmsley, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, had been bestowed by the Parliament of England on Fairfax, their general, and had been part of the marriage portion which Fairfax's daughter had brought to Buckingham. Helmsley was purchased

for near ninety thousand pounds by a goldsmith or banker, Charles Duncombe, and,

“ Helmsley, once proud Buckingham’s delight,
Slides to a scrivener or a city knight.”

The picture by the author of these lines on the death of Buckingham,

“ In the worst inn’s worst room,” &c.,

is completely imaginary. He died in one of his own farm houses, having taken cold one day after fox-hunting, by sitting on the cold ground. This threw him into an ague and fever which carried him off, after three days’ sickness, at a tenant’s house, *Kirkby-Moor-side*, a lordship of his own, near Helmsley. And besides the misstatement as to “ the worst inn’s worst room,” the two lines ending with the rhymes “ friends ” and “ ends ” are words only meant to tickle the ear. Instead of dying as in Pope’s “ Moral Essays,” he died surrounded by friends. The Earl of Arran, son to Duke Hamilton; Mr. Brian Fairfax, second son to Lord Fairfax’s uncle, to whom that title came, and other friends were with him when he died. However, Macaulay’s words are true; for though his death was not in “ the worst inn’s worst

room," it was under a humble roof, and on a coarse pallet, that Buckingham closed his chequered life.

"The spacious domain," adds Macaulay, "passed to a new race; and in a few years a palace more splendid and costly than had ever been inhabited by the magnificent Villiers rose amidst the beautiful woods and waters which had been his, and was called by the once humble name of Duncombe."

There are among the Mitchell Papers some letters from Sir Thomas Villiers, created Lord Hyde in 1756, and Earl of Clarendon in 1776, to Sir Andrew Mitchell, his successor at the Court of Berlin as the representative of England, which show that this member of the elder branch of the family of Villiers of Brooksley, was a man of a totally different character from either the first or the second Duke of Buckingham of the name of Villiers. In a letter dated 27th June, 1761, to Mitchell, Lord Hyde says:—

"MY DEAR MITCHELL,—Though I can't say that I am fond of unnecessary writing or unnecessary talking, I was happy in receiving a letter from an old friend that I love; having heard that his health which endured the follies of youth had been injured by ministerial toils. By matrimony it seems I am freed from both, and enjoy life in a plain, insignificant way, with a wife that I value, and three boys and a girl. I give no flattery and receive no favours. I am not out of humour, but see things, as far as my sight will reach, without

prejudice or partiality. How long this state of annihilation will last I can't determine as I have taken no resolutions on it, but considering my great indolence and little merit, I shall scarce be again in an active station; so my friends will scarce ever have anything of me, but my wishes which would have accompanied yours had I known they had tended to Augsbourg, I mean for yourself, for as to me I am happy that Lord Egremont is at the head of our Ministers there. Lord Granville is much as he was as to spirits and dignity, at least to us who see him daily and partially. We often talk you over, and wish for the stories we are to have when you return. Lord Jersey has rather more gout than he had, in other respects the same. . . . I wish my poor friends in your parts were as I left them. I often feel for you and for Fritsch as much as for any. Let those who are alive, who are not many, and fall in your way, be assured of my regard, esteem, and compassion, and be yourself convinced that I am unalterably yours.—H.

“My wife begs her compliments of friendship and esteem.”

In a letter dated “The Grove, 24th Sept., 1763,” Lord Hyde says:—

“MY DEAR MITCHELL,—I am very glad to find by your favour of the 3rd that your health is better, and that you are not so Germanized but that you wish to be among us; all who know you wish for your return. You will find terrible gaps in our acquaintances; death has made cruel havoc; we that remain, according to Prussian discipline, should stand the closer.”

And in a letter dated “Upper Grosvenor Street, 1st Dec., 1763,” Lord Hyde says:—

“ If anybody besides yourself thinks of me where you are, you may confidently assert that I retain warm gratitude for Berlin, but I imagine most of my ministerial and military acquaintances are gone gradually or precipitately to their last home. Should ever opportunity be so blindly favourable as to permit you to lay my duty and respects at his Prussian Majesty’s feet, you may with great truth add that I shall ever feel, as I ought, the honour done me by his Majesty’s most gracious opinion. Is there any historian attempting to describe and keep pace with his wonderful achievements? Were I as young and as unengaged as when I first knew that part of the world, I would again embark in that agitated sea. But as it is I must be contented to tell old stories to my wife and children, and to read and explain the *Gazettes*. Was there any hope of your assistance in these domestic amusements we should be all the happier. My wife joins in hearty wishes for your welfare, and in that perfect esteem with which I unalterably remain,

“ My dear Mitchell,

“ Most cordially yours,

“ HYDE.”

Mr. C. P. Villiers was, at the age of sixteen, sent to the East India College at Haileybury, where he had the advantage of studying for two years under Mr. Malthus and Sir James Mackintosh, then the Professors of Political Economy and International Law at Haileybury. Circumstances having induced Mr. Villiers to give up the intention of going to India, he had his name entered at St. John’s College, Cambridge, and took the

degrees of B.A. and B.L. in 1824, and the degree of M.A. three years later.

While an undergraduate at Cambridge, Mr. Villiers was a member of the "Union," a debating society, in which whether he was or was not a frequent speaker I cannot say, for though at that time I was an undergraduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, I was not a member of the "Union," and the only members of the "Union" whose names emerged beyond the walls of the "Union" debating-room were T. B. Macaulay and W. M. Praed. There were others who became noted afterwards, among whom may be named Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench; Charles Buller, and Charles Austin, whose unequalled success as a parliamentary counsel, by keeping him out of Parliament, possibly prevented him from being Prime Minister.

When Charles Villiers went to St. John's College, Cambridge, towards the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, an intensely aristocratic spirit prevailed over every part of Great Britain, and manifested itself in great force at the University of Cambridge. Rent of land was looked upon as the only respectable source of revenue. The profits of trade were only fitted for the pedlar class

of mankind, while the receivers of rent were the class that produced the English gentleman, who considered himself as entitled to satisfaction if he received an insult even from emperors and kings. The King, who in 1820 succeeded to the throne of England, set an example when he graciously permitted "Young Dukes" to hear him "declare His royal sense of operas or the fair." It was more than ten years before the Reform Bill of 1832, and whatever shortcoming that Reform Bill might have been guilty of, one thing it accomplished. The middle classes ceased after a time to be the standing jest of such writers as the authors of "Vivian Grey" and "Pelham," and, as the latter observed, that joke would not do any longer.

When Charles Villiers went to Cambridge, the qualifications for killing game, or rather the exemptions from the penalties inflicted by the Statute Law, were—1, The having a freehold estate of £100 *per annum*; that is one hundred pounds being required to enable a man to kill a partridge, when forty shillings enabled him to vote for a knight of the shire; 2, A leasehold for ninety-nine years of £150 *per annum*; 3, Being the son and heir apparent of an esquire, or person of

superior degree; 4, Being the owner, or keeper, of a forest, park, chase, or warren.*

But though shooting partridges and grouse might be very well, fox-hunting was the amusement befitting a gentleman. A Prime Minister, if he could not ride to hounds, was looked down upon as not quite a gentleman, according to the proper standard. Even Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington was not quite up to their mark in horsemanship. Their talk was of horses and dogs, fox-hunting, horse-racing, and tandem-driving. The walls of their rooms were covered with prints such as might be considered congenial to their cultivated minds; with portraits of celebrated racers and hunters, and dogs remarkable for their courage or sagacity, particularly when such courage and sagacity had been exhibited like those of the dog Billy, of rat-catching reputation. With those young men, though kings and lords were not as other men, of the earth earthy, but had a sort of divinity hedging them round about, so that their chaff was better than other folks' corn; yet even

* 4 Bl. Comm., 175. By the statute 1 and 2 Will. 4, c. 32, the qualification for killing game was abolished; and every certificated person may kill game, subject only to the law of trespass.

kings and lords, who could not ride quite to their satisfaction, were to be regarded as slow coaches and spoons.

This question has another aspect.

It has been thought by some that the genius of Walter Scott, which delighted in the romantic and chivalrous aspect of feudalism, has had considerable influence in obtaining for the aristocratic spirit the ascendancy it held in England for the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It seemed a vain imagination in Wordsworth to attempt to establish a respectable pedlar in the roll of honour which was appropriated to bold buccaneers and respectable* cow-stealers. Indeed, what was that foray which closed with the Battle of Otterburne? Does not the old ballad say

“Doughty Douglas was boun’ to ride
To England to drive a prey”?

An ancient name and lineage were indispensable, and really Scott had wonderful success in stamping impressions that I can hardly admit were a very

* By “respectable” here is meant a cow-stealer who was in a large way of business, and would have thought it beneath the character of a gentleman to steal a single cow, or anything less than a herd of cows with the bull or bulls.

useful or healthy part of a boy's education—impressions that associated with the gloom of Gothic castles and the high-fretted roofs and pictured windows of Gothic abbeys or colleges, the idea of grandeur, of glory and honour that were once bright and true, on the hypothesis that they had been earned by labour and won by heroic deeds. The result may perhaps be dimly indicated by some of Scott's lines which describe the entrance of Deloraine into the chancel of Melrose Abbey—

“By a steel-clenched postern door,
They enter'd now the chancel tall;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty, and light, and small.”

* * * *

“Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altars pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne!
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!”

In the same poem Scott gives a striking picture of the state of the country on the borders of

England and Scotland in the words of Wat
Tinlinn—

“ They cross’d the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burnt my little lonely tower ;
The fiend receive their souls therefor !
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight ;
But I was chased the live-long night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Full fast upon my traces came,
Until I turn’d at Priestthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright —
I had him long at high despite,
He drove my cows last Fastern’s night.”

Scott himself, in his *History of Scotland*, has given a good explanation of the effect of his own genius in describing that of the genius of Shakespeare upon the Scottish tale of Macbeth.

“ The genius of Shakspeare,” says Scott,* “ having found the tale of Macbeth in the Scottish chronicles of Holingshed, adorned it with a lustre similar to that with which a level beam of the sun often invests some fragment of glass, which, though shining at a distance with the lustre of a diamond, is, by a near investigation, discovered to be of no worth or

* *History of Scotland* contained in “*Tales of a Grandfather*,” vol. i., p. 16, note (Robert Cadell, Edinburgh, 1846).

estimation. . . . Early authorities shows no such persons as Banquo and his son Fleance. Neither were Banquo or his son ancestors of the house of Stewart."

Scott has in another of his works some instructive remarks on the effect of times which may be said to have something of a revolutionary character. In the "Monastery," Murray (the Regent) says:—

"In times like these we must look to men and not to pedigrees. Times of action makes princes into peasants and boors into barons. All families have sprung from one mean man; and it is well if they have never degenerated from his virtue who raised them first from obscurity."

"My Lord of Murray will please to except the house of Douglas," said Morton haughtily; "men have seen it in the tree, but never in the sapling—have seen it in the stream, but never in the fountain. In the earliest of our Scottish annals, the Black Douglas was powerful and distinguished as now."

"I bend to the honour of the house of Douglas," said Murray somewhat ironically; "I am conscious we of the Royal House have little right to compete with them in dignity. What though we have worn crowns and carried sceptres for a few generations, if our genealogy moves no farther back than to the humble *Alanus Dapifer*!"*

* Sir W. Scott (see "Monastery," Note N) seems to have succeeded in overthrowing Chalmers's scheme of the Douglas pedigree from Theobaldus Flammaticus. Scott says:—"The lands granted by the Abbot of Kelso to Theobaldus Flam-

Charles Pelham Villiers.



It happened to me to have a singular opportunity of observing this intensely aristocratic character in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, pervading English Society: It was at that time customary, I know not if it is the custom now, for the college tutor at Trinity College to take compassion on the unhappy Freshman who was to dine for the first time in hall, so far as to appoint him to come to his rooms a few minutes before the dinner bell rang, and consign him to the care of another Freshman who had been similarly introduced to hall a day or two before, and who by the arrangement of the college tutor was to introduce into hall another Freshman as he had himself been introduced a few days before. I think, to the best

maticus are not the same of which William de Douglas was in possession. It would appear from comparing the charter granted to Theobaldus Flammaticus that though situated on the water of Douglas, they never made a part of the barony of that name, and therefore cannot be the same with those held by William de Douglas in the succeeding generation. But if William de Douglas did not succeed Theobaldus Flammaticus, there is no more reason for holding these two persons to be father and son than if they had lived in different provinces, and we are still as far from having discovered the first mean man of the Douglas family as Hume of Godscroft was in the sixteenth century.

of my recollection, that the number of undergraduates dining daily in the hall of Trinity College, Cambridge, at that time, was about three hundred, more or less. On the day of my first dining in hall, I went by appointment to the rooms in Neville's Court of my college tutor, and was immediately introduced by him to a man of about my own height, with light hair and a remarkably good-humoured countenance, who went with me to the hall, which was close by, and taking a seat on a bench at a table covered with joints of meat and dishes of vegetables, together with bread and beer glasses filled or empty, carved some slices of meat from a joint, put them with some vegetables on his plate, and intimated to me that I was to follow his example. This was keeping terms by dining in hall.

When dinner was over we walked out, and my companion very heartily invited me to accompany him to his lodgings and take a glass of wine. But as I had resolved at that time to avoid what are called wine parties at Cambridge, I thanked him and declined—though I afterwards went to wine parties at his rooms, and he came to wine parties at my rooms, for I found it advisable to change my resolution in regard to wine parties. I have to add

that Blake, the name of the Freshman who had been asked by the college tutor to take me into hall, had been some days before taken into hall by a Freshman named Williamson, and these two Freshmen of that year remained among my friends as long as one lived, and as long as the other remained in England, for Blake told me that he was the representative of the great Admiral of the Commonwealth of England, whose eldest brother had gone to America, and I surmise, for I never asked him any questions, that he had property in the Southern States of America.* But the point I wish to bring out is this, that this American representative of the great Commonwealth Admiral, who is reputed by Sir Edward Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, in a letter to Secretary Nicholas, to have said that monarchy was a sort of government the world was weary of†—so far from holding the opinions, either

* Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in his *Life of Robert Blake*, says, p. 21, "that the Admiral's eldest brother, after the restoration, was persecuted for non-conformity, and at last quitted this country for Carolina, where some of his descendants still remain."

† "That you may see how brave and open-dealing your friends of the new Commonwealth are, Blake, at his late being at Cadiz, said openly that monarchy is a kind of government the world is weary of, that it is past in England, going

of Robert Blake or George Washington, as to royalty—had adopted the opinions of those against whom Robert Blake and George Washington fought; for he used to say it was unlucky for him that Admiral Blake had served under the Commonwealth since, if he had served under a King he, as his representative, would have inherited a peerage, a peerage which the great “admiral and general at sea” would have declined.

To minds weary of the constantly recurring spectacle of savage party spirit, rising at times into fury, at other times wearing that degraded form of malignity which has received in England the name of spite—which has been described as in some natures surviving all the other faculties, so as to give rise to the words—“his power gone—his spite immortal—a dead nettle”—there is a singular pleasure in turning to the testimony of the opposite party—of Clarendon, of Johnson, of Hume, to the valour and integrity of Robert Blake. The subject seems to rouse even Hume into enthusiasm. “Never man,” he says, “so zealous for a faction, was so

in France, and that it must get out of Spain with more gravity, but in ten years it would be determined there likewise.”—Sir Edward Hyde to Secretary Nicholas, Madrid, February 9, 1651 (*Clarendon State Papers*, vol. iii., p. 27).

much respected and esteemed, even by the opposite factions."

Blake's fate as to a peerage is suggestive and significant as to the peerage question. If a peerage were intended as a public recognition of great public services, never man had earned a peerage more truly than Robert Blake. If Blake had lived at the time when peers were persons who wore a coat of mail and not a footman's livery, his fate would have been at least to escape the ignominy of the "mean revenge" which insulted his body by dragging it from the place where it had been entombed "with," says Johnson, "all the funeral solemnity due to the remains of a man so famed for his bravery, and so spotless in his integrity."

Whatever weight may be attached to the investigation of the Lords' Committee on the subject of the *Barones Majores* having the right to sit in the Legislative Assemblies without being summoned by the King's Writ, it must be evident that peers who levied war against the Plantagenets were a different order of persons from peers who might bear the very titles of the Nevilles and the Percies under the Tudors and the Stuarts. Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, was a very different Earl of Salisbury from Richard Nevill, Earl of Salisbury

and Warwick, who fell at the Battle of Barnet, and among whose dying words Shakspeare has written these—"Who liv'd King, but I could dig his grave?" Whether he used these words or not it is certain he and Hotspur and others were very different sort of peers from the persons bearing the name of peers who were the courtiers or footmen of the Tudors and the Stuarts. Footman is the proper word. Is not the court dress at this day the dress of a footman? And as every peer puts on that dress at certain times, by doing so he transforms himself into a court footman. Is a court footman a proper and fit legislator for a great nation? A great soldier, a Marlborough or Wellington, owes his distinction not to being a peer but to being a great soldier. Of the two greatest admirals one did not live to bear the title of earl; and the body of the other was torn from its receptacle in Westminster Abbey, and cast like that of a masterless dog—for a dog that has a master is decently buried—into a pit. This was the fate of a man whom even Samuel Johnson, while bestowing on Hampden no more honourable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion," censures for acting on one occasion with temerity, in terms which may indicate the degree of his panegyric—

"We must thus admit," he says, "amidst our eulogies and applauses, that the great, the wise, and the valiant Blake was once betrayed to an inconsiderate and desperate enterprise, by the resistless ardour of his own spirit, and a noble jealousy of the honour of his country."

I will quote here some words which I have used in another place* :—

"From the time of the expulsion of the Long Parliament by Cromwell, if we except Blake—who continued to fight the foreign enemies of England, but who never, in any sense, became the creature of Cromwell†—none of the great spirits whose fixedness of purpose, intensity of will, and fierce yet single-minded and unselfish enthusiasm, had fought the great fight for liberty in the hall of debate as well as on the field of battle, had borne down before them the opposition alike of adverse opinions and of hostile armies, and extorted even from enemies a reluctant admiration, ever more acted with Cromwell. . . . Whatever vices or infirmities those men might have had, they had not the vices and infirmities of slaves or cowards—of quacks, of liars, of renegades."

* "History of the Commonwealth of England," vol. ii., pp. 478, 479 (London : John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1867).

† "Neither Blake himself, nor his brother Benjamin, nor his nephew Robert, ever set their hands to the declaration of approval of Cromwell's expulsion of the Parliament, to which Cromwell obtained the signatures of Deane, Monk, Penn, and many of the captains of the ships" (Ibid., p. 478). See the declaration in Granville Penn's "Memorials of Sir Wm. Penn," vol. i., pp. 489-491 (London, 1833).

A modern hero-worshipper who has taken Cromwell for one of his heroes in reference to Cromwell's expulsion of the Rump declares he knows not in what eyes are tears at their departure, except it be their own.

A friend of mine who wrote a review that that tended much to the success of a former work of this writer, said to me of his work on Cromwell that he had sacrificed everyone to Cromwell, and had not made much of him. This hero-worshipper has been very profuse of his scorn and reprobation towards those members of the Rump who did not lick the dust before Cromwell. The fault of each of those opponents of Cromwell is that he is not a "royal man." He then makes another outcry for "a royal man;" and all that he has to say of the fate of the men who refused submission to a tyrant, whether his name was Stuart or Cromwell, is such cowardly scurrility as this—"peppery Scot's hot head will go up on Temple Bar." Thomas Scot's last words in Parliament, as reported in Burton's Diary, are these, and they are words such as hero-worshippers are not apt to use:—

"I would be content it should be set upon my monument—if it were my last act, I own it—I was one of the king's judges. I hope it shall not be said of us, as of the Romans once, 'O homines ad servitutem parati!'"

Corn Laws

I shall be told by the critics, as I have been told by them before, that I am digressing from the strict subject-matter, namely, the struggles of the opponents of the Corn Laws; and perhaps I shall be asked what have Robert Blake and Thomas Scot in common with Charles Pelham Villiers and Richard Cobden? My answer is that as Robert Blake and Thomas Scot strove against the Divine Right of the Stuart Kings, Charles Pelham Villiers and Richard Cobden strove against the Divine Right of the Landlords, whose manifesto may be summed up in the words of a certain Irish-English peer whose English peerage dates from 11th August, 1815, and is therefore coeval with the Corn Laws. The wisdom and far-seeing intelligence of this noble lord, who had considerable landed estates and held for some years the post of prime minister of a country, the energy and intelligence of the inhabitants of which have made it famous and powerful over the world, in spite of such prime ministers as he, prompted him in the debate in the House of Lords, March 14, 1839, on Lord Fitzwilliam's Resolutions condemning the Corn Laws, to give utterance to these words:—

“To leave the whole agricultural interest without protection, I declare before God that I think it the wildest and

maddest scheme that has ever entered into the imagination of man to conceive."

To contend against such reasoning there was need of a mind which, like that of Mr. Villiers, had been trained to that rigid analysis of the principles of economic science which enables it to detect a fallacy at a glance, and to set forth a truth with the simple force and clearness that are best fitted to give it a fair chance of success.

At the General Election of 1826, Mr. C. P. Villiers was one of the candidates for the representation of Hull. The writer of a letter in a Hull paper of May, 1883, says:—

"Noticing that on Mr. C. P. Villiers's cards were the words, 'Vote for Villiers and Cheap Bread,' it struck me that it must point to the right hon. octogenarian Member for Wolverhampton, whom all England will for ever hold in affectionate remembrance for being the first to agitate for the removal of the tax on food."

The writer of the letter also says that he copied from a MS. in his possession, certain particulars relating to Mr. Villiers's family, the contest at Hull, the public offices Mr. Villiers had held, and took the liberty of forwarding the same, requesting to know if there was any truth in the statements therein. Mr. Villiers replied, with his usual

courtesy, and gave his testimony to the general accuracy of the statements in the MS. referred to as being in the possession of his correspondent. So that Mr. Villiers was, in 1826, in the field which General (then Major) Thompson entered in 1827, by the publication of his celebrated "Catechism on the Corn Laws."

In 1827 Mr. Villiers was called to the Bar, and in 1832 he was an Assistant-Commissioner under the Royal Commission appointed to make a full inquiry into the practical operation of the Poor Laws. Being one of those employed under the same Commission of Inquiry, I had then for the first time the honour of his acquaintance, and also the advantage to be derived from seeing the actual working of the English system of Poor Laws.

Mr. Villiers would probably, after devoting to the subject the time and labour required for a thorough survey of it, arrive at the following among other conclusions:—

That in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries the wages of the agricultural labourer in England were such as to procure for him nearly, if not quite, double the quantity of food which his wages between 1740 and 1794 procured; and that the wages obtained by him from 1834 to 1844, as

measured by the quantity of produce, were considerably less than in the period between 1740 and 1794.

That under the combined operation of the Poor Law of 1796 and the Corn Law of 1815, the wages of agricultural labour were lower, and the condition of the agricultural labourer was worse, than at any former period, except that in which the Poor Law of Elizabeth was passed. Mr. Villiers's labour as an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner "brought him," says the writer of the Political Memoir prefixed to his Free Trade Speeches, "into direct contact with the labouring classes, and introduced him to one of the most instructive branches of political science." Mr. Villiers may indeed have thus seen more clearly the effects of the combined operations of two bad laws upon the condition of all classes except the receiver of rent, and this would be of use to him in his free trade labours.

Whether his duties as Secretary to the Master of the Rolls and Examiner in the Court of Chancery enlarged his political views, I cannot take upon me to say.

Wolverhampton had always sought as representatives the opponents of the Corn Laws. It

returned for its first Member, Mr. Whitmore, who lost no opportunity of denouncing the injustice of the Corn Laws. When Mr. Whitmore died he was succeeded by Mr. Villiers, and the connection thus formed has not since been interrupted. From 1835 to 1884 when these words are written is a period of forty-nine years; and I think it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a case similar to that afforded by Wolverhampton and Mr. C. P. Villiers, of mutual esteem and mutual confidence between the electors and the elected.

In 1837 Mr. Villiers was chosen by the Liberals assembled at Sir William Molesworth's to become their leader in the House of Commons on the question of the Repeal of the Corn Laws. He introduced this subject March 15, 1838, and repeated his motion every year for eight years. Mr. Villiers had to fight many battles against the Corn Laws, so many and against such odds that, —and I hope the illustration will not be deemed inappropriate—when on the 10th of June, 1845, Mr. Villiers brought forward his eighth and last motion for the Repeal of the Corn Laws the circumstances of the case with its gloomy fortunes in the past and the dark clouds lowering over the future, may well recall the celebrated story told of

the exile of Ráthrin who won at last the great Battle of Bannockburn.

Robert Bruce, when lying one morning on his wretched bed, deliberating whether he had not better resign his enterprise of making good his right to the Scottish crown, and happening to look up to the roof of the cabin in which he lay, saw a spider hanging at the end of a long thread of its own spinning, and trying to swing itself from one beam in the roof to another for the purpose of fixing the line on which it meant to stretch its web. The spider made the attempt repeatedly and failed each time. Bruce counted that it had tried and failed six times; and bethought him that he had fought six battles against the English. He then resolved that if the spider should make another effort and succeed, he would try his fortune in Scotland a seventh time. The spider made another exertion and succeeded in fastening its thread to the beam which it had so often in vain attempted to reach. Bruce seeing the success of the spider resolved to try his fortune again, and as he had never before won a battle he never after lost one. Sir Walter Scott says :—

“ I have often met with people of the name of Bruce, so completely persuaded of the truth of this story, that they

would not on any account kill a spider ; because it was that insect which had shown the example of perseverance, and given a signal of good luck to their great namesake."

It is interesting to compare Mr. Villiers's first speech on the Corn Laws in the House of Commons, made March 15, 1838, with Mr. Cobden's first speech in the House of Commons, made August 25, 1841. In this, his first speech in the House of Commons, Mr. Villiers spake these words:—

"I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that thousands are now withdrawing their confidence from the Legislature in consequence of the manner in which they observe that it deals with the general interests of the country. And with respect to this question in particular, there is a tone assumed and a temper shown that no wise man can view without alarm ; for they proceed not from those from whom violence is to be apprehended, but from those on whom we must depend to suppress violence whenever it may occur—men whose intelligence gives strength to their feelings, and who now openly avow their despair of justice from this House because they observe that the power of those who passed these Laws, and who still insist upon maintaining them, has been strengthened by the Reform Bill."*

This significant remark seems to have escaped the observation of Mr. Cobden, who was not inclined to believe that there could be much difficulty in

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, vol. i., pp. 3, 4.

obtaining Repeal from the Reformed Parliament until he happened one night (February 19, 1839) about two years before he became a Member of the House, to be present as "a stranger" and witness the treatment which Mr. Villiers, when advocating Repeal, experienced from the Protectionists. From a speech of Mr. Villiers's at Salford, on the occasion of unveiling Mr. Cobden's statue, it appears that Cobden suddenly left the House, returned to Lancashire that night, and determined that he would never cease to agitate until the public should be apprised of the character of those laws and the difficulty of repealing them.

Mr. Cobden said, in his first speech in the House of Commons, August 25, 1841:—

"What are these taxes upon food? They are taxes levied upon the great body of the people, and hon. gentlemen opposite, who show such sympathy for the working classes after they have made them paupers, cannot deny my right to claim on their behalf that those taxes should be a primary consideration. I have heard them called Protection; but taxes they are, and taxes they shall be in my mouth, as long as I have the honour of a seat in this House. The bread tax is a tax primarily levied upon the poorer classes; it is a tax, at the lowest estimate, of 40 per cent. above the price we should pay if there were a free trade in corn. The report upon the handloom-weavers puts down ten shillings as the estimated weekly earnings of a family. It moreover states

that out of ten shillings each family expends five shillings on bread. The tax of 40 per cent. is, therefore, a tax of 20 per cent. upon the earnings of every labouring man's family earning ten shillings a week. How does it operate as we proceed upwards in society? The man with forty shillings a week pays an income-tax of 5 per cent.; the man of £250 a year pays but 1 per cent.; and the nobleman or millionaire, with an income of £200,000 a year, and whose family consumes no more bread than that of the agricultural labourer, pays less than one halfpenny in every £100. (Laughter.) I know not whether the laugh is at the monstrous character of the case, or at the humble individual who states it; but I repeat that the tax upon the nobleman is less than one halfpenny per cent., while upon the poor man's family it is £20 per cent. I am sure there is not an hon. member in the House who would dare to bring in a bill to levy an income-tax on all grades of society upon a scale similar to this, and yet I maintain that the bread-tax is such a tax, and is levied, not for the purposes of the State, but for the benefit of the richest portion of the community. That is a fair statement of the tax upon bread. I can sympathize with the incredulity of hon. gentlemen opposite, but if they knew the case as it really is, and felt it as they would if they did know it, they would also feel that they could not lie down to rest in comfort or safety if they voted for such a tax. . . . Let me remind the House, that the parties who have so patiently struggled for three years past for a hearing at your bar, have never been allowed to state their case; that the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Charles Villiers)—for whose great and incessant services I, in common with millions of my fellow-countrymen, feel grateful—when he

proposed that the case of those millions should be heard at the bar, had the proposition scouted and spurned; and that, when they had denied them a hearing, they proceeded to misrepresent their motives.”*

One of the difficulties Mr. Villiers had to contend with I can well understand from having experienced it myself when employed in an inquiry into the condition of the farm labourers in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, in the winter of 1844-5. The difficulty was that the Anti-Corn Law movement incurred the disadvantage of being represented—or misrepresented—as a purely manufacturers’ agitation, got up and set agoing for the purpose of lowering the wages of their workmen, and thereby enabling them to compete on more equal terms with other nations. I remember making Mr. Cobden very angry for a moment by telling him that some of the persons I met with in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, in December and January, 1844-5, puzzled me extremely at times by saying that Mr. Cobden sometimes said the Repeal would raise wages, sometimes that it would lower them.

Mr. Cobden was in the position of a counsel who is employed in a case of vast importance, beset with complications and difficulties; and he

* Cobden’s Speeches, vol. i., pp. 3-5.

showed the abilities of an advocate of a very high order. I cannot undertake to say that he never made the conflicting statements which have been mentioned ; but I have at this distance of time a distinct recollection of being met with the objections above mentioned when I was on that inquiry into the condition of the farm labourers in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, in December, 1844, and January, 1845.

My impression is in agreement with that of others who have laboured in the cause of Free Trade and, nevertheless, were not traders. At the same time, it is to be noted, with reference to Sir W. Napier's expression, "the cold, calculating baseness of commercial avarice," that avarice is avarice, whether it be commercial or non-commercial, civil or military ; whether it animates the breasts of merchants and manufacturers, or of squires, lords, kings and queens. The persons probably most free from its tyranny are such persons as laboured for Free Trade without being actuated by any very strong passion to increase their real or personal property : the objects that employed their thoughts, and might be termed the objects of their ambition, being looked upon as visionary and fantastic by the men who considered either money

or land as the only things worth having and worth striving for.

Mr. Villiers's position under these difficulties has been described with singular clearness in the Political Memoir which forms an introduction to Mr. Villiers's Free Trade Speeches :—

“His keen perception made him acutely sensitive of the embarrassments to which the predominance of one body of men in the movement exposed the cause of Repeal in both Houses of Parliament ; whilst their comparative ignorance of Parliamentary procedure, and the stubborn strength that was arrayed against them in the Legislature, placed them in no little danger, in their impatience of temporary defeat and the consciousness of numerical superiority in the country, of compromising the cause by such acts of indiscreet zeal as could only retard the object they had in view.”*

Mr. Villiers's situation was one beset with difficulties which it is not easy to analyze completely. That Mr. Villiers's difficulties in the House of Commons arose from no want of power as an advocate, as far as the most honourable functions of an advocate are in question, is shown by the declaration of a political adversary whose debating powers rendered him a competent judge of parliamentary speaking. Mr. Disraeli, when

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, Political Memoir, p. xxxiv.

1, 2.

Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1852 in Lord Derby's administration, said :—

“I may say that he may look back with proud self-complacency to the time when I remember him sitting on almost the last bench on this side of the House, and bringing forward, with the command of a master of the subject, never omitting a single point, and against all the prejudices of his audience, the question of the Corn Laws. There were no cheers then from the followers of Sir Robert Peel. There were no enthusiastic adherents then in a defunct Whig ministry. On the contrary, the right honourable baronet, the member for Carlisle, came forward and threw his broad shield over the territorial interest of England; and anybody but the honourable and learned member for Wolverhampton would have sunk in the unequal fray. I honour, respect and admire him, but I cannot agree to his Resolutions.”

The uphill battle that the Anti-Corn Law League had to fight is exemplified in the meeting held at Colchester on the 8th of July, 1843, in support of the repeal of the Corn Laws. It is hardly necessary to say that Colchester was a stronghold of Conservatism, as far as Conservatism meant the preservation of the Corn Laws, since it would have been difficult at that time to find any considerable town in Britain which was not such a stronghold. A large majority of the landholders and clergy throughout England was in favour of the Corn Laws, and a large majority of the

thousands of people assembled at the Colchester meeting from all parts of the country was expected by the Protectionists to be in favour of the maintenance of the Corn Laws and against the advocates of Repeal. Indeed violence to the latter was apprehended and special constables were sworn in. Never perhaps was the effect of Mr. Cobden's speaking, which, to borrow the well-chosen words of Mr. Bright, "was so simple and easy and true," more wonderfully manifested than on this occasion. The farmers at first refused to listen to him. Before the end of his speech he won their attention if not their acquiescence.

Mr. Villiers, who followed Sir John Tyrrell, was received with great cheering, and closed his speech with a passage thus reported:—

"If the people get poorer, can the farmer get rich while his customers are declining? ['No.'] And if competition compels him to give the highest price for his land, can he pay his rent if the produce falls in price? ['No, no.'] Where then is the advantage to any one in such an unnatural regulation? The Corn Laws have lasted twenty-eight years; what good have they done you? You are now called upon to make known your sentiments on the subject. You are summoned here as jurors before your country; and after a full and fair trial of these Laws, you are bound to declare your verdict upon them. What do you say? Are the Corn

Laws guilty or not guilty? [Loud cries of 'Guilty!' and some cries of 'No.'] Well, then, you who think that they ought to be abolished speak out like men—in a manner no longer to be misunderstood; and never again allow yourselves to be misrepresented as wishing to perpetuate a system fraught with folly and injustice, and unattended with real benefit to any one. Thanking you sincerely for the attention that you have given me, I will now make way for those who may be waiting to address you.”*

Rents had been rising for a good many years before the passing of the 1815 Corn Laws, which in 1843 had, as Mr. Villiers says, lasted for twenty-eight† years. They continued to rise steadily under the Corn Laws of 1815. The landlords being thus prosperous maintained that the Corn Laws being good for them were good for what they called the agricultural interest. The Corn Laws raised rents. Did they raise profits and wages? Are men to conclude from the fact that the farmers, or some of them, hunted in red coats, and occasionally killed foxes, that the Corn Laws had raised their profits as they had raised their landlord's rents?

* Villiers's *Free Trade Speeches*, vol. ii., p. 61.

† I suppose Mr. Villiers means the Law of 1815, which, together with some subsequent modifications of it, may receive the plural name of Corn Laws.

"I am no orator," said Mr. Villiers* in his speech in Covent Garden Theatre, July 3, 1844, "I simply stated facts, in support of my Resolutions, disclosing the distress of the people. And I asked for an answer; I asked for a proof that the Corn Laws were not an injury to the people. How was I met? Do you think that if they could have proved that the labourers were well off they would not have done so? Do you think that if the farmers could have been shown to have benefitted in one single respect, or if advantages resulted to anybody but themselves from these Laws, we should not have heard of it?"

In his speech at Colchester, July 8, 1843, Mr. Villiers† said:—

"We sometimes tell them in the House that the special object of the Corn Laws is to keep up rents. But they always say in reply that this is a vulgar view of the question; that if rent were the object of the Corn Laws, there would be no difficulty in getting rid of them; that country gentlemen would give them up at once. What is the object then? They say that the farmers and farm labourers are so well pleased with these Laws for the good they have done them that they won't hear of their being abolished. That they are really the people for whom the Corn Laws are wanted. The farmers depend upon them for profit, and the labourer gets good work and good wages by means of them. ['No.'] Nevertheless, from the beginning to the end of a discussion on the Corn Laws in the House of Commons, we hear of

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, vol. ii., p. 186.

† Ibid., vol. ii., p. 52.

nothing but of your [the farmers'] interests. Is it not, therefore, consistent with our sincerity in this cause that we should come among you, and face to face talk over the matter, and so learn your real feelings on the subject—because, be it remembered, all are agreed now on the mischief that the Corn Laws do to all other classes, and, as I have already said, you [the farmers] alone are made the pretext and excuse for their continuance? Is it not reasonable and laudable in Mr. Cobden to come here to discuss the question with you, when there are so many things afloat to make one believe that you are not properly represented?—when people declare that the Corn Laws have done you so much good?—when, as he says, you and your landlords are all jumbled up together in a sort of family party, called the landed interest, and are said to be so prosperous on account of them?"

It appears from the evidence cited by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Villiers that the capital of the tenantry had been disappearing in the preceding ten, twelve, or fifteen years; that many of the farmers had become insolvent, the wages of labourers being paid out of the farmers' capital. Mr. John Houghton, a land agent on property in Lincoln, Bucks, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Northampton and Suffolk, said:—

"When I have been paying workmen in provincial towns they have said, 'You have all the money of the place for rents, and the tenants cannot pay us.'"*

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, vol. ii., pp. 55, 56.

Mr. W. Cox, of Scotsgrove, Bucks, said:—

“A great part of the farmers have failed; and more than half the rest, if they were to reckon, would be insolvent.”

Mr. John Rolfe, Beaconsfield, Bucks, was examined:—

“Do you mean to say that one half of the tenantry in your district are insolvent?—Yes, I do.”

Mr. William Thurnall, Daxford, Cambridge, says:—

“The condition of the tenantry is I think verging on insolvency, not only in Cambridge, but in a great part of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.”

Mr. Charles Howard, East Riding, Yorkshire, when asked—

“Are the present wages of labourers paid out of the profits of the farmer or out of his capital?” said—“Out of his capital.”

Mr. J. G. Cooper, Blythburgh, Suffolk:—

“What is the state of the farmer?—The condition of the farmer I consider to be bordering on ruin.”*

In a former page I have quoted some words of a Whig Minister, which are remarkable for several things; but passing over those words that are intended to convey the ministerial sense of the

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, vol. ii., pp. 55, 56.

Minister's knowledge and wisdom and the ignorance and folly of all who condemn the Corn Laws, I will call attention to one word in particular. The noble lord says:—

“To leave the whole agricultural interest without Protection; I declare before God that I think it the wildest and maddest scheme that has ever entered into the imagination of man to conceive.”

By the word *whole* here prefixed to agricultural interest, the noble lord makes the usual assumption that the agricultural interest comprehended the farmers and the labourers in the same sense as it comprehended the landlords—certainly a strong assumption, since an opinion has prevailed somewhat extensively that rent and profits, and rent and wages do not vary in a direct but in an inverse ratio.

Lord Fitzwilliam's resolutions condemning the Corn Laws were rejected in the House of Lords, March 14, 1839, by 224 to 24. Mr. Villiers's motion in the House of Commons, made March 12, 1839, after a debate of five nights, was rejected by 342 to 195. The result was the organization of the Anti-Corn Law League. The Council of the League was formed of the executive committee of the Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association, which the League

absorbed. The central offices of the League were established at Manchester.

There is an argument mentioned by Mr. Villiers in his speech in the House of Commons, May 26, 1840, contained in the answers of the handloom weavers to the Handloom Commissioners, which, as Mr. Villiers observes, is not urged altogether without reason.* The handloom weavers say:—

“We have as good a right to have a tax imposed upon machinery as the landowners have to a tax upon the produce of more fertile soils. The country in the last case is taxed for the benefit of a class: we have an equal claim to a tax on machinery; for the principle is the same: it is taxing the community for the benefit of a few.”

And they say further that if the Legislature will neither act wisely as regards the public and repeal the Laws, nor consistently towards them by taxing machinery, then they will seek to be represented more faithfully in this House than they are at present. They claim the suffrage with the view of getting justice; and it is a strange spectacle to see the persons who have got hold of the soil of this country, or of any country, setting up a claim to compel all the inhabitants of the country to go

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, vol. i., p. 209.

to their shop, and no other shop in the world, to buy their bread. Sometimes it was salt in which the monopoly was set up. When Strafford was attempting to make Charles I. a free, that is, an absolute monarch, he recommended that the King should be "sole merchant" of salt because, like bread, it is "of absolute necessity, and may at all times be raised in price—witness the *gabelles* of salt in France."* Witness also some other things which such statesmen as Strafford leave out of their reckoning.

On the 8th of April, 1844, a deputation of the League, including Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, and Colonel Thompson, and accompanied by the two borough Members, Mr. Villiers and Mr. Thornley, visited Wolverhampton, where a meeting was held in a large pavilion erected for the occasion, it having been evident from the interest manifested that no building in the town was large enough to contain the numbers assembled.

Mr. Villiers began his speech by expressing the great pleasure he experienced in observing the numbers assembled to receive and welcome and give cordial thanks to the distinguished men present,

* Strafford's Letters and Despatches, vol. i., p. 193.

"whom," said Mr. Villiers, "I may term the apostles of Freedom of Commerce."

"You were never deceived," said Mr. Villiers, "by the jargon of Monopoly, which sought to prove, if it sought to prove anything, that scarcity is a blessing." To which fallacy Mr. Villiers once heard a working man give this answer: "If scarcity is such a good thing for the working classes, what a blessing no food at all would be!"

In the course of his speech Mr. Villiers gave some interesting illustrations of that strange hallucination by which the landlords jumbled up together in a sort of family party themselves as lords of the soil, the tenant farmers, and the labourers, and gave it the name of the landed interest.

"The League," says Mr. Villiers, "is now grappling well with its two great opponents, Interest and Ignorance. It is facing those who assert their interest in the Corn Laws, and it tells them that the Laws are as foolish as they are wrong. It seeks to enlighten the ignorant and to infuse a little spirit into those who dare not call their souls their own. It has drawn the great men of monopoly from their retirement; it has brought them before the public; it has made them speak out and show cause why these Laws should not be abolished. And a pretty mess the great men have made of their case. The wisdom of their former silence

has become striking even to themselves, I should think. When men have nothing to conceal they may talk freely; but not otherwise, especially if they have been found out. Sir Robert Peel, I believe, has admonished his friends that silence is golden; but the League has driven the squires mad, and they will not be advised—they will talk. Formerly they could say many things with impunity in Parliament that now they cannot say with the least safety anywhere. They used to tell the House how prosperous the farmer was, how happy and how contented the labourers were, and how they loved their lords. The farmers and labourers never heard what they said, and the Members for Wolverhampton were told, if they ventured to object, that they knew nothing of the farmers and labourers. Lately, however, the squires have been saying these things in the counties, and within earshot of the farmers. And at last the poor farmers all over the country have been roused into thinking for themselves. And they are asking themselves and one another, how it is that the Corn Laws can have been so beneficial to them, seeing that no good at all has ever been done them; that for the last twenty-eight years they have been very badly off—never certain of anything—in short, worse off than their neighbours. It is a little more than they can stand, to be told that laws passed to keep up rents are all for their good, and that the landlord cares nothing about his rent. The farmers have been questioning and thinking about this for the last year; and at last, as if they can endure it no longer, a thing has happened, the like of which, I suppose, has never happened in this country before: two real live farmers from different parts of the country, not known to each other, but both precisely the kind of farmers said to be benefitted by the

Corn Laws, came to London, and told Mr. Cobden that, if there were an opportunity, they should be perfectly ready to state the real case of the farmers at Covent Garden Theatre, at one of the great meetings held there by the League. Accordingly, about a fortnight ago they did so, and a very strange tale they told about the blessings of Corn Laws to them. Such a tale, indeed, that if there is any modesty in the landlords, they will never again, as long as they live, mention the farmers as an excuse for their monopoly. It is impossible to do justice now to the narration of all the mischief that the two farmers declared the Corn Laws had inflicted upon them, especially as farmers. But they defied contradiction of anything that they said, and they have not received any. They are noted as good farmers in their counties, and are well known as estimable and able men in other respects.”*

Now that statues have been raised and clubs formed in honour of the repeal of the Corn Laws, it would be no easy matter to convey an idea of the extremely hostile feeling that for some years prevailed against the Anti-Corn Law League. It was not merely the Tory party that evinced aversion and contempt for the “men of cotton and cant,” as some of their organs in the press phrased it. No Tory could have despised the men that formed the bulk of the Anti-Corn Law League more than the ministers, Lord Melbourne and

* Villiers’s Free Trade Speeches, vol. ii., pp. 93-96.

Lord Palmerston, who, without a shadow of pretension to ancestors whose names appeared either in the Domesday Survey or among the barons of Magna Carta, looked down upon the "men of cotton and cant" with a scorn as lofty as if they had been able to prove an uninterrupted lineal descent from a genuine pirate. Perhaps they might have had means of proving such a descent, for those who had seen slave ships used to say that Lord Palmerston seemed to them to have much the appearance of the captain of a slaver. They laughed at the Anti-Corn Law League and treated its efforts to influence the mind of the public as the tricks of mountebanks. Lord Granville, in his speech at Wolverhampton, on the occasion of unveiling the statue of the Right Hon. C. P. Villiers, on June 6, 1879, said :—

"An offer to him to become Governor of Bombay was withdrawn, in consequence of objections raised by the East India Company, exclusively owing to the political antecedents of Mr. Villiers, and the low company he had kept in his communications with the Anti-Corn Law League."

It is evident from this that Mr. Villiers derived nothing but loss in the world at large from his exertions in the cause of Corn Law Repeal. Those who have had, like Mr. Disraeli, as he expressed it

in the House of Commons, "the honour and gratification of his acquaintance," may truly say that Mr. Villiers never acted in the matter with the view to make capital for himself out of it, and was really too well pleased with the result of all that had occurred, ever to complain of being deliberately snuffed out for the sake of the greater glorification of others. Mr. Villiers himself stated that being by birth connected with the landed interest, and having no kind of connection whatever with manufactures,* he could not have acted in the matter under the stimulus of commercial avarice.

Mr. Villiers, in one of his speeches, used some words which are full of meaning, though as in the case of Antony's speech over Cæsar's body, they are somewhat misleading since Antony, while saying, "I am no orator as Brutus is," was far more of an orator than Brutus.

"I am no orator," said Mr. Villiers in his speech in Covent Garden Theatre, July 3, 1844; "I simply stated facts in support of my Resolutions, disclosing the distress of the people. And I asked for an answer; I asked for a proof that the Corn Laws were not an injury to the people."†

* Speech at Colchester, July 8, 1843. Villiers's *Free Trade Speeches*, vol. ii., p. 53.

† Villiers's *Free Trade Speeches*, vol. ii., p. 186.

Now, in the case of Mr. Villiers, the words "I simply stated facts," have a meaning ; for the word "fact" has a meaning impressed on it, and strengthened by constant use for a good many ages. In the vocabulary, however, of several eminent forensic advocates, the word "fact" has not the meaning it has in the vulgar tongue. But Mr. Villiers's ambition did not aspire to any place high or low in the roll of eminent forensic advocates, and when he said, "I am no orator, I simply state facts," he meant to convey the same meaning that an average man of honour would have conveyed by the words—nothing more than that. Mr. Villiers had too much self-respect to lie for a client, though that client might be the English nation. Therefore the conduct of the League in omitting, in their final proceedings, all public recognition of their Parliamentary leader was exceedingly strange—was strange even to a degree of strangeness to which a much stronger word belongs—to omit all public recognition of a Parliamentary advocate, of whom, and of what he had done for them, they had so much cause to be proud.

And the special reason they had to be proud of him was that he was no orator, and simply stated facts—that he did not profess to have a command

over facts—to have, in other words, a power of making and unmaking facts at his pleasure. What does that mean? And what does “no orator” mean? Does it mean that it is part of the business of an orator to make facts to suit his purpose? Is it? Yet I hardly think Cicero *made* those “facts” about Antony in the second Philippi, which cost the orator his life. The sting lay in the terrible truth of them. One charge* went deeper from Cicero’s stating that he spoke from personal knowledge; for even in that depraved age of Rome, men who shrunk from no vice shrunk from the brand of disgrace implied in such a charge.

It may be not without use to state more fully the meaning of the words, a command over facts.

“A command over facts” is understood to be the distinctive quality of the highest paid advocates. The reader may ask, what is a command over facts? A command over facts is such a power as the Creator exercised when He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. An advocate of this high order, when he wants facts, creates them for the occasion, and marshalls them in the order and array best suited to the purpose he has in view.

* Cic. Phil. 2, 18.

Such an advocate has been thus described by an eminent lawyer who had occasion to watch his career :—

“No advocate had a greater command over facts. His statement of his client’s case, and even his reading from the evidence in the cause, would enchain the attention, and often extort the admiration and astonishment of his adversaries and the court—as if it were a romance.”

An advocate of this type may be expected to get more honour and more profit than an advocate who, in the exercise of his duty, if he is entrusted with the defence of a prisoner for murder, and on examining the evidence sees that the crime cannot be proved, will get off the criminal by showing that the crime cannot be proved, but will not utter a single word which he knows to be an untruth. Such an advocate has very small chance of being Lord Chancellor. The Reverend Sydney Smith says in a letter to a son who was writing a life of his father, and applied to Sydney Smith for assistance as one of his father’s friends :—

“Curran, the Master of the Rolls, said to Mr. Grattan, ‘You would be the greatest man of your age, Grattan, if you would buy a few yards of red tape, and tie up your bills and papers.’ This was the fault or the misfortune of your excellent father ; he never knew the use of red tape.”

The eminent person alluded to appears to have been somewhat scantily rewarded for his services by his very good friends the Whig Aristocracy. If a very subordinate office was all the reward they thought fit to bestow, it shows that it was a better recommendation to high employment under a Whig Administration to be a "relation of Lord Grey's or a tool of Lord Brougham's" than to be "a consummate master of metaphysics and moral philosophy, a profound historian, and an accomplished orator." However, the Rev. Sydney Smith seems to think that it was not so much the possession of the qualities above indicated and the authorship of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, as the want of certain other qualities that hindered the promotion of the individual alluded to, who, though he has been called "an accomplished orator," was not an orator—for orators are powerful and often arrogant and grasping. Whereas the Rev. Sydney Smith says of Sir James:—

"If he had been arrogant and grasping; if he had been faithless and false; if he had been always eager to strangle infant genius in its cradle; always ready to betray and to blacken those with whom he sat at meat; he would have passed many men, who, in the course of his long life, have passed him."

I have seen the advocate referred to as notable for his great "command over facts" in the Court of Chancery, and I have admired the luminous conciseness of his statement of facts. I have heard him in the Court of a Vice-Chancellor, who was a most courteous and good-humoured gentleman, enforce his argument in these words—"Your Honour must feel, as a gentleman, that," &c., &c. "Oh, yes! Oh, yes!" replied his Honour, evidently appreciating the compliment. It was most curious to see this eminent advocate, when he turned from addressing his Honour the Vice-Chancellor to answer a question put to him by the counsel on the opposite side, how instantaneously the purr of the domestic cat with which he had been addressing the Vice-Chancellor changed into the angry growl of the tiger when he answered his opponent's question. This man used to say, when a somewhat dubious case was submitted to him—"Well, we can get a decree" (from this Vice-Chancellor); "but then the Chancellor will upset it."

This shows, in regard to the question as to what oratory can do and what it cannot do, that the character of the audience is a most important

factor in the problem. Where the audience is a single judge, or more than a single judge, or a jury, an adroit advocate may so mould his discourse as to obtain their suffrages. But I do not believe that the most powerful orator that ever appeared upon earth would, though he spoke with the tongue of men and of angels when he asked for an abolition of the bread-tax, get a single vote from a House of Commons or a House of Lords composed of landowners who had prospered as the British landlords had prospered by the high price of corn and the consequent rise of rents.

It has been said with some truth that there is no greatness without originality. By originality I mean mental power sufficient to originate new ideas. John Mill used to say that happiness consisted in having work to do and doing it. A friend of John Mill used to say that happiness consisted in having new ideas. John Mill's estimate of that friend may be inferred from the fact that when the former was proposed as a member of the Political Economy Club, he would only consent to have his name brought forward on the condition that his friend should be elected a member of the club at the same time. The friend

of Mill alluded to was one of the many subtle thinkers who appear in this world, but live and die unheard, leaving no name behind them.

The founders of the Cobden Club seem to have adopted some words used by Mr. Cobden towards the end of his "1793 and 1853." The words used by Mr. Cobden are "Peace on earth and good-will towards men." The words used by the Club are "Free Trade, Peace, Good-will among Nations," accompanied by a somewhat grim effigy of their new Messiah. There are certain memories summoned up by those religious or quasi-religious professions of unbounded philanthropy which startle those who recall the beginning and the end of the first French Revolution. The Jacobin Club did not say "Peace and Good Will among nations," but it said "Liberty, Equality, and Universal Philanthropy," the "universal philanthropy" meaning in reality universal murder.

I will quote, on the subject of bringing religion into the question when honesty would do, a writer whose opinion respecting the new Messiah was pretty much the same as mine, and who can express much better than I can the peculiar points of the question. General Perronet Thompson, the writer I allude to, in his paper on "Saint

Simonianism" in the thirty-second number of *The Westminster Review*, says:—

"The thirteenth, fourteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth sittings introduce religion. On which it is enough to state, and leave every man to decide on its truth by his experience—that there never was but one class of men that needlessly introduced religion as the instrument of settling men's temporal affairs, and but one other class that ever have submitted to it. The world wants *honest* lawgivers, not pious ones. If piety will make men honest, let them favour us with the honesty, and keep the piety for God and their own consciences. There never was a man that brought piety upon the board when honesty would do, without its being possible to trace a transfusion in the shape of money or money's worth from his neighbour's pocket into his. The object of puzzling the question with religion is clear. You cannot quarrel for sixpences with the man who is helping you the way to heaven. The man who wants your sixpences therefore assumes a religious phraseology, which is cant; and cant is fraud, and fraud is dishonesty, and the dishonest should have a mark set on them."

But as there may be clubs that profess philanthropy when they mean murder, so there may be clubs that, without much profession of exalted benevolence, brotherly love, and such rodомontade, are really benefactors of mankind. The Political Economy Club was a club of this kind. Professor Bain, in his *Life of James Mill*, mentions an

important service rendered to Free Trade by James Mill in being one of the founders of the Political Economy Club in 1821; an important event which should have been recorded in the Political Memoir prefixed to Mr. Villiers's Free Trade Speeches.

The projector of the Political Economy Club was Thomas Tooke, who drafted the Petition to Parliament of 8th May, 1820, from the Merchants of London, in favour of Free Trade. The Club had its origin in a small knot of Political Economists who had for some time held evening meetings at Ricardo's house for the discussion of economical questions.

"The furthering of the Free Trade movement inaugurated by the Merchants' Petition was the foremost object in the view of the projectors of the Club. Mill was specially named to draft the Rules, the original of which is still preserved in his hand."*

Professor Bain adds in reference to the early members of the Club :—

"The survivors among the early members of the Club well remember Mill's crushing criticism of Malthus's speeches."

* Life of James Mill, by Alexander Bain, LL.D., Emeritus Professor of Logic in the University of Aberdeen (London: Longmans and Co., 1882), pp. 198, 199.

Political Economy was not James Mill's strong point, and if clearness of style was not Malthus's strong point, James Mill made no discovery in Political Economy to be compared to Malthus's discovery of the principle of population. Moreover, as John Mill has shown, many of the conclusions of Ricardo and James Mill can only be admitted if their premisses are admitted—which is impossible.

Johnson defines Club (in his definition (4) of that word)—“An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions.” Now, there are two Clubs which demand our attention here—the Political Economy Club and the Cobden Club. Whether or not the Political Economy Club could be termed “an assembly of good fellows,” it had claims to be termed an assembly of sages, for it contained among its members Ricardo and Malthus, of whom the latter had discovered a law as important to the human race as the law, the discovery of which had made the name of Isaac Newton immortal.

But if the Political Economy Club may be called an assembly of sages, the Cobden Club can hardly lay claim to such a designation. The Cobden Club, indeed, at the time of the year when

after-dinner speeches are most in season, has a dinner followed by speeches in which Mr. Cobden is duly glorified as the apostle of Free Trade. Admitting that Richard Cobden was a remarkable man, when a club assumes his name, it may be asked, if so much of Cobden's mantle has fallen upon the Cobden Club as to render it a remarkable Club? and if so, what are its claims to distinction?

The Political Economy Club, though it contained men of original thought, also contained men of whom a subtle analysis is given in some words of a letter of James Mill to Lord Brougham, dated 5th October, 1835, and published in Professor Bain's *Life of James Mill*, p. 393. The words of James Mill are these :—

“As for McCulloch, he has a knack at finding people stealing from him ; though there is nothing in him to steal ; for all that he has is either the opinion of some other previous writer, or an error.”

I do not presume to say that the Cobden Club may not in the course of time favour the world with discoveries. But I venture to doubt the appearance of new ideas in answer to an advertisement. The Cobden Club offers prizes for certain Essays which they advertise as Cobden Club Essays. I doubt if the most minute search could

discover any prize essay that was worth printing. The *Principia* of Newton and the *Essay on the Principles of Population* of Malthus were not prize essays.

There is some evidence on the subject of the effect of prizes in the Calendars of the English Universities. In the case of the Seatonian Prize, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, the Master of Clare, and the Greek Professor are the judges, and have made the award now for more than a hundred years. The poems which obtained the prize were printed at the time; and these poems have been published in two volumes; but it does not appear as yet that the effect has been very great in the way of the immortality that poets are supposed to desire. Indeed the successful prizemen may be considered as somewhat similarly situated with the writer who, according to Byron, "cultivated much private renown in the shape of Latin verses." It is not to be supposed that the judges selected by the Cobden Club to adjudicate the prize for the best Essay on the future of Free Trade, have more chance of discovering a political economist who shall see further than any preceding political economist, than the judges selected by the University of Cambridge

have of discovering a poet who shall soar higher than Shakspeare and Milton.

Mr. Villiers in a letter to me, of June 3, 1884, says, there was nothing of which the man whose name the Club bears had a greater horror than of being made the hero of a tavern dinner. Mr. Villiers in the same letter also says:—

“The Cobden Club, so far as it celebrates a great achievement in our commercial history, enables a great many people, by sending in their subscriptions, to announce their adoption of Free Trade views. The Club by means of annual subscriptions and original payments upon entry receive, I believe, a good deal of money, and much of this, as I have understood, has been expended in the publication and circulation of works on Free Trade, and of speeches of certain public men which have been selected by the Secretary.”

It follows that the Secretary of the Cobden Club is invested with a certain amount of power bearing the proportion to the power Mr. Cobden had when the Anti-Corn Law League expended on the press a thousand pounds a week which an unknown quantity bears to a thousand pounds a week

CHAPTER IV.

THE LANDLORDS.

SOME of us who, like the old man in the story-book, have "gone flying in the face of the Bible," where, according to that old man's dutiful and affectionate son "three score-and-ten's the mark ; and no man with a conscience, and a proper sense of what's expected of him, has any business to live longer," can bring up strange memories of the days when George the Third was King and his son was Regent. In those days of the Regency the British landlords were glorious upon earth. Their power seemed as firmly established as that of Louis XIV. when the star of his prosperous fortune was in its blazing zenith.* They had

* In a speech made in the House of Commons, February 26, 1846, Mr. Villiers said, "Up to the present time it has been the boast of the landed proprietors that they have chosen the Ministers of the Country."—*Villiers's Free Trade Speeches*, vol. ii., p. 332.

enriched themselves by a war, the most expensive in which their country had ever been engaged. The general who had conducted that war with consummate ability was on their side. Everything that had opposed them was prostrate in the dust; and the monarchical potentates of Europe were banded together in a Holy Alliance to establish them, as Strafford wrote to Charles the First, "in wealth, strength, and glory, far above any of their progenitors."*

In this plenitude of power, the English, Scotch, and Irish landlords could find little more for their hearts to desire. Their palaces — for their old manor-houses† were found too rude and too small

* Strafford's Letters and Despatches, vol. ii., pp. 61-62.

† Some of those manor-houses might suggest antiquity of family. But the wars of the Roses had rooted up most of the older families. I knew a manor-house from its belonging to an old friend which once belonged to Robert Bruce, King of Scotland. There was a moat round it of clear water full of beautiful water-plants. It came to Robert Bruce in this way. Bruce, Lord of Skelton and Anandale, gave Anandale to his second son who complained to his father that he could not get wheaten bread in Scotland. Thereupon his father gave him the manor I have referred to, and another in Essex to supply him with wheaten bread. I forget the name of the manor in Essex, but I feel confidence in the accuracy of the

for their rapidly expanding greatness—exhibited every luxury that the planet on which they dwelt could produce. All that the world possessed of rich and rare, of gorgeous and beautiful, to tempt the appetite and delight the eye, to gratify the senses and feast the imagination, was theirs. All the inventions of science, all the resources of art contributed to their enjoyment. The most industrious and ingenious people the world had ever seen, was toiling from morning to night and from night to morning to procure them new pleasures, to produce for them new discoveries in the arts of luxury. And all this rested on a foundation of military and naval force, so great that without much of a metaphor it may be said, their armies covered the earth, their navies swept the ocean.*

authority for this story, which I saw in a paper in *The Quarterly Review*, written, I believe, by J. G. Lockhart, the Editor of that Review, who was deeply read in historical antiquities.

* The power of Great Britain is very well expressed in the following passage of Mr. Cobden's work, entitled "1793 and 1853," p. 64:—"The French have a lively recollection of the terrible disasters they suffered from the implacable enmity of our government during the last war. They found themselves assailed by a feudal aristocracy, having at its command the wealth of a manufacturing and mercantile people, thus



The Landlords.

There was one element of their happiness, one ingredient in their cup of prosperity; that must not be passed over. They had a state-religion, which, though it professed self-denial as the very essence of it, and forbade unlicensed carnal pleasure under the penalty of an eternity of carnal pain, was dear to them as the very pleasantest of their vices. There was a pungency of pleasure indescribably refreshing to a faded appetite, in revelling amid forbidden joys under the very eyes of the hierarchs of the Church that forbade them. It was true, the strict text was clear in regard to respect of persons. But the living commentators could expound the paradox. The ascetic precepts of their state-religion might be good, very good for men at large, but correctly interpreted they were clearly not intended for persons of their quality, and they might perhaps be of the opinion of a court lady* of the time of Louis XIV. who, when doubts of the salvation of the King's brother were expressed in her presence, said very gravely, "I assure you that with respect to people of that quality, God thinks twice before damning them."

presenting the most formidable combination for warlike purposes to be found recorded in the world's history."

* Madame la Maréchale de Meilleraye. *Nouveaux Mémoires de Dangean*, p. 82.

A similarity has been said to be nothing but a slight difference. When the difference becomes a good deal more than slight, the similarity may disappear and difference take its place. There is a curious and interesting illustration of this subtle connection between similarity and difference afforded by the similarity and difference between the French and English aristocracy. In the eighteenth century the French aristocracy paid no taxes. Was there ever a time when the English aristocracy paid no taxes? In the nineteenth century, as General Perronet Thompson has observed in his Catechism on the Corn Laws, the English aristocracy paid taxes and recovered them through another tax, the Corn Law, that caused the community to lose the amount ten times over. On this result General Thompson observes, "We are prodigiously stupid. *Our* posterity will have very little to say about the wisdom of their ancestors."

But the difference between the French and the English aristocracy is here very curiously manifested. The French aristocracy paid no taxes; the English aristocracy paid taxes but not their due proportion of taxes; and recovered far more than they paid through another tax, the Corn Law. The French aristocracy were destroyed by the people they had long robbed and oppressed. For

the English aristocracy, too, there might come a day of reckoning. They were like the horse-leech which had swallowed more blood than was good for it, and its health required that its tail should be dipped in salt. "And," says the writer above quoted, "they may think themselves well off, that this is all. They will have their tails salted yet, they may depend upon it; as certainly as the manufacturers would, if they had been all this time laying a duty on home-grown corn."

The landlord class, including simple squires as well as the titled nobility, in its relation to the trading and professional classes, somewhat resembled the French noblesse before the Revolution in its relation to the bourgeoisie. For more than the first quarter of the nineteenth century, even the members of the House of Commons were regarded by the upper portion of the landlord class somewhat as the doorkeeper of the House of Lords regarded them in the beginning of the seventeenth century, shutting the door in their faces with the words, "Good man burgess, you come not here." The wives of men who would sit in the House of Lords on the death of their fathers, have been heard to say that the men in question would then—that is, when they sat in the House of Lords—be among gentlemen. If circumstances had per-

mitted the fashionable morals of the Regency to be continued for some generations, and the lofty pretensions of the men of large rentals to become loftier by the bread-tax being made perpetual, the pride and luxury of the rent-receiving class, like the pride and luxury of the French noblesse, would have gone on advancing in extravagance and audacity till they reached that condition in which words that have been applied to the French noblesse before the Revolution might be applied to them:—"All the old safeguards were broken down, and no new ones created. Ties formerly the most sacred became despised. Marriage was a farce: honesty, as between man and man, was obsolete. The decencies as well as the virtues of life passed away; and every licentious desire had uncontrollable dominion."

When within a period of years not exceeding the duration of a single life the rent of land ran up so rapidly as to be more than trebled—more even than quintupled—it is not very surprising to find the territorial grandees, who had in some sort abandoned for a time their old pretensions to regard the industrial and trading classes of their countrymen as little better than a subjugated race, —when they saw estates, the rental of which less than half a century back would have been reckoned

high at twenty hundred pounds sterling a year, run up in a few years to be worth twenty thousand pounds sterling a year,—resume their old attitude of conquerors and look down on those with whom for a portion of the eighteenth century they had associated on a footing of equality, as a pack of despicable pedlars.

It was the isolation of England by the great war with Bonaparte, or Buonaparté as was the grammatical form of the name, that made England so much dependent on her own produce for food, and thus raised rent so prodigiously. When Bonaparte fell, the Corn Laws were resorted to as a substitute for Bonaparte in the raising of rents. Lord Byron in his satire, "The Age of Bronze," which appeared, I think, in 1823, that is somewhat more than two years after the death of George III. and the accession of George IV., has some lines on this subject of rent. I will quote a few of them :—

"For what were all these country patriots born?
To hunt and vote and raise the price of corn ?

* * *

Why would you trouble Buonaparté's reign ?

* * *

Why did you chain him on yon isle so lone ?

The man was worth much more upon his throne.

* * *

But where is now the goodly audit ale ?
The purse-proud tenant, never known to fail ?
The farm which never yet was left on hand ?
The marsh reclaimed to most improving land ?
The impatient hope of the expiring lease ?
The doubling rental ?”

Those who have had opportunities of observation have seen the effects of the prospect of the expiring lease and the doubling rental in encouraging profuse expenditure, and an increase of the number and magnitude of the demands on the increased rents. In the place of the old manor houses, costly and extensive mansions were built. It was as if the old manor houses, that seemed built for men of moderate means, had disappeared, and in their room had sprung up palaces such as kings or emperors might deign to dwell in. Some large landholders have been heard to declare that they pulled down some of those vast palaces which had been built before they came to the succession because they were too large for the estate. The only remedy that occurred to them being an increase of rent, even beyond that which had already taken place, the satirist represents their cry as being—

“Down with everything, and up with rent,
Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent ;
Being, end, aim, religion—rent, rent, rent !”

The writer of the lines above quoted, besides being a wit and a poet, was one of those who, though his estates were encumbered, must have profited with the other receivers of rent from the influence of the Corn Laws on the price of bread. Yet his rentals could hardly have risen so as to treble or even to double in a few years, since his biographers give us reason to conclude that the interior at Newstead never exhibited the profuse luxury and licentious revelry which are indicated in the opening stanzas of *Childe Harold*. Not the less, however, does Lord Byron's case serve as an illustration of the effects of the high rents in raising to a notable height the pride and arrogance of the landlord class. For the profuse luxury—the lordly revelry—

“The goblets brimm'd with every costly wine,
And all that might to luxury invite,”

—if they were above the means of men of small or encumbered estates, characterized the banquets of the larger landholders, whose pride was not unworthy of kings. And if Lord Byron was not equal in wealth, his pride was equal to the pride of the largest-acred baron or squire who voted for the Corn Laws. His pride was very much pride of race, as if the sword had made him a conqueror,

lord of the soil, and of all who trod the soil. If Lord Byron could have proved that the Byrons were the same family as the Buruns, and that

“eight-and-forty manors

Were their reward for following Billy's banners,”

the Byrons, whether Norman or not Norman, were as thoroughly beaten at Marston Moor* as the English were at Hastings; and the men who beat them—men who, wherever they went, never found an enemy that could stand their onset, said in their Remonstrance to the Parliament for justice on the King: “If kings claim by right of conquest, God hath given us the same right against them, and there is an end to their pretensions as if the whole people were made only for them, and to serve their lusts.”

The men who made that Remonstrance to the Long Parliament put down in England the divine

* Some idea may be formed of the slaughter in the encounter between Rupert's and Cromwell's cavalry at Marston Moor, brought on by Lord Byron's impetuosity in dashing over the ditch that separated him from Cromwell's cuirassiers, from the fact that four of Lord Byron's brothers fell. There must have been six brothers at least, for Sir John Byron, created Lord Byron, in 1643 was succeeded in 1652 by his brother, Richard Byron.

right of kings, which arrogated the right to treat the people as if the people were made only to be their slaves. The Anti-Corn Law League had to contend with the divine right of squires, which claimed the power of having a monopoly of the food of the people. In an admirable letter which I will quote presently, Mr. Bright says of the Americans putting down slavery, "It is strange that a people who put down slavery are not able to suppress monopoly, which is but a milder form of the same evil." Much as I have read on the subject of Protection or Monopoly and Free Trade, I never met with so clear an exposition of the text of "Nations slowly wise and meanly just," as the remarks of Mr. Bright which I am about to quote. What we have seen in our own days goes far to corroborate Mr. Bright's remark—that freedom of industry will do much to put down great armies and the peril and suffering of war. I will quote a few words in illustration of this point from a traveller of singular courage and great intelligence:—

"The English," says Mr. Borrow,* "who have never been at war with Portugal, who have fought for its independence

* "The Bible in Spain," chap. viii.

on land and sea, and always with success, who have forced themselves, by a treaty of commerce, to drink its coarse and filthy wines, which no other nation cares to taste, are the most unpopular people who visit Portugal."

The lowering of the duties on French wines has had an effect very different from the treaty of commerce with Portugal. The introduction into England of French wines is beneficial to the bodily health of the English ; it has also a pacific tendency in proportion to the quantity of claret and other French wines consumed in England and the consequent numbers of Frenchmen, from the capitalist to the labourer, interested in the wine trade between France and England. And though treaties of commerce are not strictly in agreement with the principle of Free Trade, the commercial treaty which Mr. Cobden negotiated with France may be admitted to have had a beneficial and a pacific tendency in regard to the two great nations concerned in it.

I will now give Mr. Bright's letter from which I have quoted a few words :—

"The man," says Mr. Bright in a letter* to a friend in

* Mr. John Bright to Mr. Cyrus W. Field of New York, dated January 21, 1879, and published in *The Daily News*, February 19, 1879.

America, "who possesses a monopoly by which he thinks he gains is not open to argument. It was so in this country forty years ago, and it is so with you now. It is strange that a people who put down slavery at an immense sacrifice are not able to suppress monopoly, which is but a milder form of the same evil. Under slavery the man was seized and his labour stolen from him, and the profit of it enjoyed by his master and owner. Under Protection the man is apparently free, but is denied the right to exchange the produce of his labour except with his countrymen, who offer him much less for it than the foreigner would give. Some portion of his labour is thus confiscated. In our protective days, our weavers and artisans could not exchange with American flour. They exchanged with an English farmer, who gave them sometimes only half the quantity the American would have given them. Now your farmer is forbidden to trade with the Englishman, and must give to an American double the quantity of grain and flour for many articles he is constantly requiring that he would give if your laws did not forbid his trade with England. A country may have democratic institutions, its government may be Republican, and based on a wide suffrage, and yet there may be no freedom to men for that which is the source of life and comfort. If a man's labour is not free, the man is not free. And whether the law which enacts this restriction be the offspring of republican or autocratic government and power, it is equally evil to be condemned and withstood by all who love freedom and understand what it is. Nations learn slowly—but they do learn; and therefore I do not doubt that the time will come when trade will be as free as the winds, and when freedom of industry will do

much to put down great armies and the peril and suffering of war."

I should be wanting in my duty in the publication of a chapter headed "Landlords," if I did not at least make an effort, however inadequate, to delineate a class of the species "Landlords" which has produced some specimens that may well call for the astonishment, if not the admiration of mankind. I have attempted to give in the third section of the next chapter some very imperfect notes of the treatment which the people of Scotland receive from their landlords. I will here give one or two examples of the treatment the people of Ireland have received from their landlords. In Scotland the relation of landlord and tenant may, in some cases, be very unsatisfactory, but its effects do not manifest themselves much beyond the sphere of their immediate action. In Ireland the relation of landlords and tenants is such as to produce the most disagreeable effects to the inhabitants of Great Britain who reap none of the profits obtained by the landlords of Ireland, and consequently reap nothing but loss and ignominy, while the landlords of Ireland reap all the profit and all the honour, if honour it can be called.

The inhabitants of Ireland have taken up a deep

and murderous hatred towards the inhabitants of Great Britain. The whole story of the causes of this hatred would be "sad to tell and long to trace." But it has manifested itself by overt acts of the most murderous kind—acts which perhaps should not be called *overt*, since they have more of the character of *covert* than *overt*. One of their attempts at murder on a large scale was to blow up a railway train in an underground London railway filled with industrious Englishmen and Englishwomen who had never done any injury or given any offence to the murderous Irish who had laid explosives in the railway tunnel to destroy the passengers of the railway train.

It therefore seems a duty incumbent on Englishmen to attempt to direct public attention to the cause of this state of things in such a way as to afford some chance of putting a stop to such disgusting exhibitions of the worst and most disgraceful of human passions. But the cause of this deplorable state of things is so closely connected with the relation of landlord and tenant, that some words explanatory of that relation in Ireland will be necessary.

Everybody knows that there is a wide difference between farming in England and farming in Ireland.

In England, landlords having to deal with capitalist farmers can see their own advantage in making it the interest of the tenant to improve the land ; or even in improving it for him. An average Irish landlord does not even go so far in improving his estate as to put up the fences and farm buildings which everywhere else are provided by the landlord. They are left to the labourer-tenant to provide; and if a tenant is willing, by making them better than ordinary, to add to the value of the farm, there is nothing in the English feudal law of landlord and tenant to prevent the landlord from waiting till it is done, and then making his appearance and seizing on the result, in the shape of additional rent from the tenant, for the fruits of his own labour, or turning out the tenant if he is unable or unwilling to pay such additional rent.

In looking over the map of Ireland the eye may chance to meet with the word *Kilkee*, not on "Galway's shipwreck'd coast," but on the coast of the adjoining county of Clare. The French showed their good taste at the same time with their chivalrous spirit in erecting at Coruña a monument to the memory of Sir John Moore, with this simple inscription :—

JOHN MOORE,
LEADER OF THE ENGLISH ARMIES,
KILLED IN BATTLE,
16 *January*, 1809.

In attempting to raise a memorial to Kilkee the simple brevity of the French inscription to the memory of the English General killed at the battle of Coruña, cannot be imitated. Yet as Sir John Moore, though he wanted that perfect self-confidence in great emergencies, which belongs only to the highest order of minds, died in his duty like a gallant soldier, and fills an honourable grave, and his name will be for ever associated with chivalrous courage, keen sense of honour, and enthusiastic devotion to the duties of his profession and the service of his country; so the name of Kilkee will be associated with the exertion, not merely of honest industry, but of extraordinary energy and enterprise in the creation of a flourishing town under the blighting curse of the English law of landlord and tenant—a law belonging to the pirate age, and made by men who were barbarians and robbers.

The disgrace of the frightful robbery committed on those poor Irish labourer-tenants who, after

they had increased by their labour the value of the property in some instances 700 per cent. had the alternative given them of either having the rents at once raised to the full value of the improvements or of being turned adrift to wander about as vagabonds on the face of the earth, and carry with them to America an exile's sorrows and an outlaw's hate—for though it may be shown to be in accordance with the *form of law*, it was a robbery of the most cruel nature—a robbery that took advantage of the best qualities of its victims to make those very qualities the instruments of their destruction—the disgrace of this frightful robbery, I say, must fall not on the head landlords who, in such cases, only followed the law of human nature, but on those who coming forward to make laws to redress the law of human nature produced the English law of landlord and tenant, which had its foundation in the system of government introduced into England by the man who displayed the same spirit of unrelenting cruelty when he enclosed the New Forest, and when he reduced the northern counties of England to a desert. It is not creditable to any government calling itself a Christian and civilized government to allow such a law to remain on the English Statute Book. If an equitable allowance

had been made for the Kilkee improvements by an equitable law of landlord and tenant, a vast amount of crime and of the consequences of crime might have been avoided.

Having had occasion to examine somewhat minutely the English law of landlord and tenant, I will quote here a portion of what I have said elsewhere on that subject:—

“The English law of landlord and tenant having during the last six hundred years been made by the landlords, may be expected to favour the landlords rather than the tenants. The operation of the law of landlord and tenant is partly seen in the numerous cases in the law reports where the tenant is a man of some capital, and can make a fight in the courts of law against the landlord. But another picture is presented in the numerous cases where the law can be, and has been made an instrument of grinding oppression in the hands of those who have become the landlords of the cottages and small houses inhabited by the working men, whether farm labourers in the country or artificers in the towns. But though the oppression in these cases is very grievous, it is mercy compared to that which the English law of landlord and tenant has enabled those who have got possession of land in Ireland to apply to tenants completely at their mercy.”

In the case of Ireland the Encumbered Estates Act—though intended to substitute for landlords, without capital for improvement, a better class of landlords—showed the difficulty of the question

dealt with, for it defeated the intentions of its framers, and exchanged one set of bad landlords for a set of landlords worse than the former. This effect of the Act is shown in a passage quoted in a note to J. S. Mill's *Political Economy* (vol. i., p. 413, sixth edition, 1865), from a *private communication from Professor Cairnes*.

“A class of men, not very numerous, but sufficiently so to do much mischief, have, through the Landed Estates Court, got into possession of land in Ireland, who, of all classes, are least likely to recognize the duties of a landlord's position. These are small traders in towns, who by dint of sheer parsimony, frequently combined with money-lending at usurious rates, have succeeded, in the course of a long life, in scraping together as much money as will enable them to buy fifty or a hundred acres of land. These people never think of turning farmers, but, proud of their position as landlords, proceed to turn it to the utmost account. An instance of this kind came under my notice lately. The tenants on the property were, at the time of the purchase, some twelve years ago, in a tolerably comfortable state. Within that period [that is, within twelve years] their rent has been raised three several times; and it is now, as I am informed by the priest of the district, nearly double its amount at the commencement of the present proprietor's reign. The result is that the people, who were formerly in tolerable comfort, are now reduced to poverty; two of them have left the property and squatted near an adjacent turf bog, where they exist trusting for support to occasional jobs. If this man is not shot, he will

injure himself through the deterioration of his property, but meantime he has been getting 8 or 10 per cent. on his purchase-money. This is by no means a rare case. The scandal which such occurrences cause casts its reflection on transactions of a wholly different and perfectly legitimate kind, where the removal of the tenants is simply an act of mercy for all parties."

A thorough reform of the law of landlord and tenant has no chance of passing the House of Lords. To a person acquainted with other parts of England it seems incomprehensible that the people of London should submit to the tyrannous absurdity of being compelled to build houses upon land which, by the terms of the lease, is, at the end of ninety-nine years, to be given up, with everything on it, to the landowner, while during the ninety-nine years they are to pay a yearly rent, called a ground-rent, for the land. The device of such ninety-nine years' leases in London is due to the power of the great land monopolists, the Dukes of Bedford, Portland, Westminster, the Marquis of Salisbury and others. Those persons, not content with having become owners of large portions of national property by the liberality of Henry VIII., James I. and William III. in giving away what did not belong to them, employed the most astute lawyers that could be got for money

to devise schemes such as this of making a house and the land on which it is built return at the end of ninety-nine years to the ground landlord. This device, framed by the conveyancing counsel of the great landowners, is eagerly seized on by tradesmen, who invest their savings in land for building, and have been heard to declare the delight with which they would step in at the end of ninety-nine years and take away the house from the children of the man who built it or bought it from the builder of it. To any one who has not got saddled with the vampire notion that ninety-nine years' leases are part of the original scheme of Creation, it is at once a monstrous absurdity and intolerable injustice that, when a man builds a house on another man's land, for the use of which he pays a yearly ground-rent representing at the date of the lease not merely the full annual value of the land on which the house is built, but double, sometimes treble* its annual value, the person to

* A case came to my knowledge only yesterday where land, the annual value of which was £6, was let for building a house at a ground rent of twenty guineas. The gentleman who built the house for himself at a cost of £2000, on a ninety-nine years' lease, built a house that would last more than double ninety-nine years. Consequently the ground-

whom the ground-rent is paid should step in and take away the house from the children of the builder. One direct result of such a system is the erection of houses not intended to last longer than the lease. But there are other results more serious. Among these is the deep hatred which injustice and oppression, backed by power such as that of the British House of Lords, are sure to produce sooner or later. The great peer sets the example of oppression to the small tradesman who deals in house property, and the small tradesman, in his dealing with men or women poorer than himself, fortifies his conscience with the reflection that Providence ordained that the large fish should eat the small.

It will help to explain the London ninety-nine years' lease system to compare it with the system of Manchester, where the houses are built upon land for which a yearly ground-rent is paid. This ground-rent is not limited to ninety-nine years, but so long as it is paid the payer of it is absolute owner of the land. An interesting illustration of this is afforded by the case of Mr. Cobden. It is

rent man will step in at the end of the ninety-nine years and turn out the children of the builder of this substantial house.

mentioned by Mr. Cobden's biographer that Mr. Cobden, having made speculative purchases of land in various quarters of Manchester where his imagination painted a great demand for buildings on the repeal of the Corn Laws, was compelled to pay a thousand pounds a year as ground-rent. But as long as the thousand pounds a year was paid the land was his own, and would have increased in value if houses, shops and factories had been built on it. Mr. Cobden it seems kept up for twenty-five years this payment, which would therefore amount to a sum of £25,000, and helps us to understand how Mr. Cobden was enabled to absorb the amount collected for him, which has been estimated at not much under £200,000. I have not happened to meet with any case of ground-rents in London being speculated on in this way. But suppose a man were to build an expensive factory such as are built at Manchester on a ninety-nine years' lease, at the termination of which lease the factory, worth several thousand pounds, would fall into the pocket of the ground-rent landlord, the inference is that no such factories would be built, and the trade of Manchester would not have existed, but Manchester would be now the village or small town it was two centuries ago.

The land of England was held on certain conditions, which may be termed the purchase-money of that land. That purchase-money had been made payable as a sort of perpetual annuity to the State, increasing in value as the land increased in value. But the Convention Parliament of 1660 passed an Act by a majority of two—the votes being 151 for, and 149 against—the Act 12 Car. 2, c. 14—that the holders of the land of England should be totally exonerated from the future payment of this perpetual annuity, which constituted the purchase-money of their estates; and that this annuity, or purchase-money, should for the future be paid, in the shape of an excise, by people who held none of the land for which they were thus made to pay. In the debate many members spoke vehemently against the measure proposed. The most learned lawyer of that time, Prynne, said it was not fit to make all housekeepers hold *in capite*, and to free the nobility; and inveighed passionately, says the Diary, against the excise, which was to be substituted in lieu of the payments for which the lands of England had been granted to be held as private property.

Without embarrassing the reader with legal technicalities, it may be sufficient to say that so

far as the words of their laws enable us to judge of their meaning and intention, the framers of no inconsiderable portion of that system of government which is generally understood when we say the English Constitution, certainly intended that the tax which the land was to pay was to be a certain proportion of the "full yearly value thereof at the time of assessing thereof," not a proportion of a nominal yearly value thereof. It may be added in corroboration that in all the land-tax acts down to the 38 Geo. 3 inclusive, the commissioners are directed to appoint "assessors" (see 38 Geo. 3, c. 5, s. 8) for the purpose of assessing all property, real as well as personal. Now unless there was to be every year a new assessment, collectors of the moneys to be levied would be sufficient, whereas, after directing the appointment of assessors, there is always a distinct and separate clause for the appointment of "collectors of the moneys which shall be assessed as aforesaid."

William the Norman took from the Anglo-Saxons their country, but bound himself and his successors, as far as he could bind them, by engagements, which were fulfilled for six hundred years, to defray the main part of the expenses

of governing it in peace and defending it in war. Upon these conditions William the Norman and some sixty thousand of his followers became masters of the land of a country which contained a very large quantity of fertile land. To repudiate these conditions and declare that in future the expenses of the government in peace and war should be paid by taxes on the poor, was to reduce the bulk of the community to the condition of a people like the Dutch. This was what William the Dutchman did for England.

To substitute for the rent to the State, which was the *purchase-money* of the land, a vast number of taxes on industry and commercial enterprise was to reduce a country like England to the condition of a country like Holland. And the parallel was followed so far as to introduce the funding system, and the system of raising money by lotteries, and to leave nothing untaxed from salt to French wine. The effect was to deprive the people of England of many of the natural advantages of soil and climate, and reduce the quantity of land in England (as far as the bulk of the population was concerned) to the quantity of land in Holland.

The manner of dealing with the Irish forfeitures

seems to have cooled even Lord Macaulay's zeal for his Dutch hero. Lord Macaulay says:—

“If his Parliament had been forced to defer, year after year, the consideration of so large and complex a question as that of the Irish forfeitures, it ill became him to take advantage of such a *laches* with the eagerness of a shrewd attorney. Many persons who were sincerely attached to his government, and disapproved of resumptions, thought the case of these forfeitures an exception to the general rule. . . . Of all the grants the largest was to Woodstock, the eldest son of Portland; the next was to Albemarle. An admirer of William cannot relate without pain that he divided between these two foreigners an extent of country larger than Hertfordshire. . . . William's answer was that he had thought himself bound to reward out of the forfeited property those who had served him well, and especially those who had borne a principal part in the reduction of Ireland. The war, he said, had left a heavy debt; and he should be glad to see that debt reduced by just and effectual means. This answer was but a bad one; and, in truth, it was hardly possible for him to return a good one. He had done what was indefensible; and, by attempting to defend himself, he made his case worse. It was not true that the Irish forfeitures, or one-fifth part of them, had been granted to men who had distinguished themselves in the Irish war; and it was not judicious to hint that those forfeitures could not justly be applied to the discharge of the public debts. The Commons murmured, and not altogether without reason. ‘His Majesty tells us,’ they said, ‘that the debts fall to us and the forfeitures to him. We are to make good out of the

purses of Englishmen what was spent upon the war; and he is to put into the purses of Dutchmen what was got by the war.' ”*

I am not writing about William the Third, but it was necessary to introduce him here to show how easily the land had been obtained which some of our noble landlords let on such terms as those ninety-nine years' building leases, so craftily devised to suck the blood of the unhappy man who is so ill-advised as to build a substantial house under such leases. Among the other debts we owe to “Old Glorious” is this, that his Dutch advisers designed that the method of raising money by a pound rate—the subsidy of earlier days or the Land Tax Act of 4 William and Mary, c. 1, the *principle* of which was strictly observed in the five succeeding years—should not prove effectual in order to reduce us to the necessity of taxing consumption, and thereby, because taxes on consumption must always be heavy upon trade, prevent our being such formidable rivals to the Dutch.†

* Macaulay's History of England, iv., pp. 323, 324, 327.

† See Cunningham's History of Taxes, p. 186, 3rd edition. London, 1778.

Mr. Villiers, in his speech in the House of Commons, May 9, 1843, said:—

“Let them remember what has been the consequence of urging that there are peculiar burdens on the land as a pretext for the Corn Laws. Inquiry into its truth was demanded. Two motions were made in this House for it. But they were not carried. No; the House shrank from them. And why? Because, after the matter had been thoroughly sifted, it was found that so far from there being exclusive charges, there were shameful exemptions.”

After a few words respecting the tithes as a plea for raising rent by law, Mr. Villiers went on to the question of the Land Tax:—

“As for the Land Tax, it is doubtless a deduction from rent, but one to which the State is entitled; and surely, considering the manner in which the landlords in Parliament have dealt with it since it was imposed, it never can be for their interest to have it discussed or inquired into: no man can learn that history without almost feeling that, as a class, the landowners have proved themselves utterly unworthy of public trust. Nothing ever was more shameless than the manner in which the State has been deprived of its due amount of the Land Tax by a gross violation of the bargain the landowners made with the Crown when it was imposed. It was strictly in lieu of the feudal services by which alone their lands were held, and from which 4s in the pound on the rental were required—clearly an inadequate commutation for the inconvenience to which such services

would have exposed them; but which, did it yield what it ought, would now cover the whole amount of the Excise, and thereby dispense with it. If the Land Tax now paid its proper quota, it would yield thirteen millions a year instead of little more than one million; and by causing the assessment to be fixed upon the valuation of the land made 150 years since, the public have been defrauded of the difference.”*

Mr. Villiers has, as has been seen in the above extract from his speech, estimated the Land Tax in 1843 at, if it paid its proper quota, thirteen millions a year instead of little more than one million. In the Financial Reform Almanack for 1876, page 39, the Land Tax is described as a tax—it is not a tax at all, but the purchase-money of the land payable in the shape of a perpetual annuity—which at this day (1876) should be producing £30,000,000 a year towards the public revenue, in place of only £1,000,000 a year, as it is now doing. When it is borne in mind that this £30,000,000 a year represents the result of a transaction of such magnitude that it changed, transformed all the land of an extensive country from public land into private land, the magnitude of the perpetual annuity which represents the

* Villiers's Free Trade Speeches, vol. ii., pp. 42-44.

purchase-money will not be considered as in any degree extravagant or beyond the limits of fair dealing, of reason, and equity. It will not be considered extravagant, when the claims of those who have got present possession of this landed property is taken into consideration—the claim that the land is theirs for the whole remainder of eternity, notwithstanding the truth shining by its own light, that landed property must be more limited in its nature than other proprietary rights, because no man made the land.

CHAPTER V.

SECTION I.

PEASANT LIFE.

THE peasant life may be more picturesque than the artisan life; but the artisan is less helpless against oppression than the peasant. Lord Macaulay relates how, in consequence of the state of the currency in 1695—

“The labourer found that the bit of metal, which, when he received it, was called a shilling, would hardly, when he wanted to purchase a pot of beer or a loaf of rye bread, go as far as sixpence. Where artisans of more than usual intelligence were collected in great numbers, as in the dock-yard at Chatham, they were able to make their complaints heard and to obtain some redress. But the ignorant and helpless peasant was cruelly ground between one class which would give money only by tale, and another which would take it only by weight.”*

And the peasant's wretched condition had lasted

* History of England, iv., 119.

for innumerable ages—through which they lived like the beasts with which they shared the tillage of the ground, and then died like those beasts, leaving no trace behind them of a moral and intellectual being. Day and night, summer and winter succeeded each other, but the sun of each successive day which brought so many blessings to the prosperous and the happy, brought nothing to them but fresh toil and suffering, and, it might be, the reflection that they were one step nearer to the grave in which they would be at rest, and feel cold and hunger, pain and sorrow no more. And if that inanimate dust, which once had life and a human form, were now to be endowed with the power of human speech, what tales of oppression and suffering, of agony and horror, could it not unfold? The country churchyard seems to awaken memories that carry the mind of the observer further back into the past than the urban churchyard, though the latter may show one or two names more celebrated than any that may be read on the tombstones of the former. The village Hampden and the mute inglorious Milton, if they ever lived the village life out of Gray's "Elegy," lived and died as unheard of and as unrecorded as if they had never been. There

have undoubtedly been men who though born peasants have succeeded in climbing "the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar." But the mass did not thereby emerge from its lot of poverty and toil. For they are particularly deprived of that power of combined action which is within the power of the artisans of some degree of cultivated intelligence, collected in considerable numbers in towns. This evil has gone on increasing till acre after acre of the soil of England which was termed common land has been appropriated with the manifest effect of making the rich richer, and the poor poorer.

The inclosure of commons may be taken as an instance of the conversion into private property of what was not private property, under the pretence that the effect will be to give more employment to the agricultural labourer. In my inquiry into this question, the evidence which I received, and my own observation, were not in favour of the conclusion that the inclosure of commons was advantageous to the poor. On the contrary, as the number of inclosure bills increased the condition of the agricultural labourer became worse and worse, till a man had but seven shillings a week to support himself, his wife, and seven children.

In reference to the conversion into private property of what was not private property, it may be remarked here that, according to the system of law established in England at the Conquest, in those waste lands, which are usually called commons, the property of the soil is generally in the lord of the manor.* But in common fields the property of the soil is in the particular tenants.†

There is evidence that though the lords of manors were the predominant powers in regard to the land question according to the law of England, the commoners, as they were termed, were not altogether powerless. Thus, to give an illustration or two, the right of the commoners to the pasturage may be subservient to the right of the lord of the manor; for if the lord of the manor has immemorially built houses or dug clay-pits upon the common without any regard to the extent of the herbage, the immemorial exercise of such acts is evidence that the lord reserved that right to himself, when he granted the right of pasturage to the commoners.‡ And if a lord of a manor plant trees upon a common, a commoner, though he has

* 2 Bl. Comm. 32.

† Ibid.

‡ 5 T. R. 411.

no right to cut them down, has a remedy by an action.*

Such cases show that the class called commoners in the English law books had a recognized position in the English constitutional polity; and it would seem that a scheme which made use of the authority of the English Parliament for converting those waste lands and common fields in which the poorer classes of the community, though they had not the property of the soil, had such a beneficial interest in the land "as to feed their beasts, to catch fish, to dig turf, to cut wood, or the like,"† was a scheme somewhat analogous to that of Sancho Panza when governor of the island of Barataria. It is said by the witnesses examined before the Parliamentary Committee of 1844, on the inclosure of Commons, that judicious inclosure would make a large portion of common lands much more productive. This may be a tolerably safe prediction; but it has two aspects. Its productiveness may be advantageous to some and disadvantageous to others. Sancho Panza's plan of deriving advan-

* 6 T. R. 483; 1 Bos. and Pul. 14.

† 2 Bl. Comm. 32.

tage from the government of an island, looked rather promising to Sancho himself, for it was a very simple proceeding. Sancho simply proposed to sell the inhabitants of the island for slaves, and put the money in his pocket. But to the people sold the plan might not appear so good as it did to Sancho.

Sancho Panza's scheme of getting rich, though it may wear the semblance of being only one of the elaborate jokes of him who was said to have "smiled Spain's chivalry away," has a melancholy affinity with certain schemes which, instead of being jocular and imaginary, are, on the contrary, too serious and too real. Since the year 1800, about two thousand inclosure acts have passed. Before that time about one thousand six hundred or one thousand seven hundred had passed. It was stated in evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1844, that a large extent of common and waste land had been illegally inclosed under the provisions of the Act of 1836 (6 and 7 Wm. IV., c. 115), passed for facilitating the inclosure of open and arable fields in England and Wales; and the persons who hold such lands have no legal title, and can only obtain one by lapse of time. The chief motive for thus dealing with

commons appears to have been that they thus get the inclosure done cheaper than by applying to Parliament for a private act.

Those persons whose passion for getting rich has induced them to make such use of the English law and English Parliament, have deprived themselves of any right to complain, if those Englishmen who have not derived any benefit from the inclosures of common land should take leave to inquire somewhat minutely into the whole subject of property in land.

Those who seek to go on increasing their riches by the inclosure of commons or waste land may say, if they think fit, that they are increasing the productiveness of their country, and as a consequence, its population; but they are destroying the natural beauty of their country, and more than the natural beauty, the ideas associated in the mind of man, with solitary meditation in fresh air and amid wild flowers and clear streams. With the inclosure of commons and waste land is closely connected the stopping up of public footpaths and ancient rights of way, and the rooting up every hedge-row and hedge-row tree, and ploughing up every place where a wild flower or shrub could grow. I will quote some remarks from J. S. Mill

in defence of what Adam Smith has called the stationary state which, to the political economist of the last two generations, presented a stagnant and unpleasing prospect:—

“The density of population necessary to enable mankind to obtain, in the greatest degree, all the advantages both of co-operation and of social intercourse, has, in all the most populous countries, been attained. A population may be too crowded, though all be amply supplied with food and raiment, It is not good for man to be kept perforce at all times in the presence of his species. A world from which solitude is extirpated is a very poor ideal. Solitude, in the sense of being often alone, is essential to any depth of meditation or of character; and solitude in the presence of natural beauty and grandeur is the cradle of thoughts and aspirations which are not only good for the individual, but which society could ill do without. Nor is there much satisfaction in contemplating the world with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature; with every rood of land brought into cultivation, which is capable of growing food, for human beings; every flowery waste or natural pasture ploughed up, all quadrupeds or birds which are not domesticated for man’s use exterminated as his rivals for food, every hedge-row or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a wild shrub or flower could grow without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture. If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not a better or a happier population,

I sincerely hope, for the sake posterity, that they will be content to be stationary long before necessity compels them to it.”*

Mill goes on to say:—

“It is scarcely necessary to remark that a stationary condition of capital and population implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be as much scope as ever for all kinds of mental culture, and moral and social progress; as much room for improving the Art of Living, and much more likelihood of its being improved, when minds ceased to be engrossed by the art of getting on. . . . Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day’s toil of any human being. They have enabled a greater population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number of manufacturers and others to make fortunes.”†

In another page of the same work the writer says:—

“The exclusive right to the land for purposes of cultivation does not imply an exclusive right to it for purposes of access; and no such right ought to be recognized except to the extent necessary to protect the produce against damage, and the owner’s privacy against invasion. The pretension of two dukes to shut up a part of the Highlands, and exclude the

* Principles of Political Economy, by John Stuart Mill, vol. ii., p. 331, sixth edition. London: Longmans and Co., 1865.

† Ibid.

rest of mankind from many square miles of mountain scenery to prevent disturbance to wild animals is an abuse ; it exceeds the legitimate bounds of the right of landed property. When land is not intended to be cultivated, no good reason can in general be given for its being private property at all ; and if any one is permitted to call it his, he ought to know that he holds it by sufferance of the community, and on an implied condition that his ownership, since it cannot possibly do them any good, at least shall not deprive them of any, which they could have derived from the land if it had been unappropriated. Even in the case of cultivated land, a man whom, though only one among millions, the law permits to hold thousands of acres as his single share, is not entitled to think that all this is given to him to use and abuse, and deal with as if it concerned nobody but himself.”*

In the passage last quoted from J. S. Mill's Political Economy the words “ necessary to protect the owner's privacy against invasion ” are particularly deserving of attention, and before I had recurred to the passage for the present purpose, I had noted in the margin of the newspaper (*The Daily News* for April 18, 1844) containing a letter headed “ Trout fishing in Scotland,” and signed “ J. A. Erskine Stuart,” an objection that occurred to me at the time to what is said in the letter about what the writer calls “ a fisher's path.”

* Principles of Political Economy, vol. i., pp. 290, 291.

The words used in the letter are "there is what is called a fisher's path from the source to the mouth of the river, and this gives a manifest right of way from time immemorial to the angler." The note I made at the time is this: "An objection to a fisher's path is that when all the population of a populous town have access to this 'fisher's path,' when the path approaches very near to the landowner's mansion or dwelling-house, the owner or landholder has surely a right to demand that the law shall protect his privacy against invasion. I know several cases where a trout or salmon stream runs through a private park in which is the owner's mansion-house. If the 'fisher's path' doctrine be law there is an end to all privacy in the life of any one who has a trout stream running through his park. And a blessing is thus, by this 'fisher's path' theory, turned into a curse.

At the same time it must be observed that within the last half century the landholders have become much more strict than they were before in prohibiting angling even for trout, to say nothing of salmon; and their proceedings in that matter, added to their game preservation being destructive of the small crops of the peasant tenants, of which an account written from personal observation will

be given in the third section of this chapter, cannot be viewed as having a tendency to strengthen their position, and to establish them as Strafford bragged he would establish Charles the First and his posterity in wealth, strength, and glory, far above any of their progenitors.

The question of trout-fishing is complicated by the vast increase of population which renders "free trout-fishing" a very different thing from what it was when the population was comparatively small. I know nothing to which the word Conservative may be more judiciously applied than to the preservation of the *fair* pursuit of trout-fishing; that is to the angling for trout with the artificial fly, and not to the use of certain kinds of bait which may tend to the production of a large bag, but to the destruction of all fair fishing, and only to be practised by those who fish, not for health and sport, but for the pot, and bring discredit on angling as turning it to a mere trade in fish.

CHAPTER V.

SECTION II.

AN ENGLISH VILLAGE IN 1844-5.

I WILL endeavour to give from my rough notes some idea of the condition of the peasantry of the district I had undertaken to visit for the purpose especially of ascertaining how much of the average earnings of a peasant's family go in purchasing clothing and articles paying excise or duty to government, as stated in the words of Mr. Cobden's letter to me, dated Manchester, November 5, 1844, and quoted in the Introduction.

One day in the month of December, 1844, I walked along the road that ascends a somewhat steep hill separating two villages from one another in one of the south-western counties of England. The view from the summit of this hill (and there are several such views in that part of the country, which is a good deal wooded, and beautifully

diversified with hill, dale, and water) is a finer one than English scenery, which is apt, though soft and rich, to be somewhat tame, usually furnishes. When this view first opened upon me, the effect of the various colours presented by woodland, pasture, and ploughed land, joined to the very slight haze, or frost fog, in the atmosphere, natural to a day in December, was as if I had come suddenly upon a bay with the sea immediately beneath me. As I began to descend, however, the illusion was gradually dispelled, and I beheld a scene which at a more favourable time of the year I felt must be one of great natural beauty, and must have presented a fine specimen of an English village, at least as far as regards the picturesque, for the village in question was so scattered that it might be almost said to be co-extensive with the parish in which it was situated—a circumstance which may add much to the picturesqueness, without, as appeared in this instance, adding anything to the prosperity of a village.

Sir Walter Scott in *Waverley*, in his description of the hamlet of Tully-Veolan, says: “The houses seemed miserable in the extreme, especially to an eye accustomed to the smiling neatness of English cottages.” Alas! either “the smiling neatness of

English cottages" has, at least in some districts of England, passed away, or Sir Walter Scott's knowledge of English cottages was very partial and imperfect.

Arthur Young, travelling in France before the Revolution, and walking up hill, bridle in hand, overtook a poor woman, looking sixty years of age though she was not twenty-eight. She said that she and her husband had seven children, a farm with one cow and one little horse. Their cow helped them to support their children, but the rent and taxes they had to pay for their little farm crushed them down. She said she had heard that somewhere, in some manner, something was to be done for the poor.

I met with cases in that inquiry showing how what has been turns up again in this world whirling round its old axis. To call this "strange!" would be a foolish saying, we should rather say "strange!" if it were not so. A new lacker of more or less brightness in its polish is every now and then laid on the surface of the old machine. But the machinery within goes grinding on in its old way. In a melancholy majority of cases the hearts of men are hard and their brains soft, whereas the chances would be considerably better with softer

hearts and harder brains. With all that philosophers write, and all that philanthropists do (and I really believe in the existence of true philanthropists even in spite of the existence of false philanthropists), the old saying "homo homini lupus," "man is a wolf to man," still holds true: and the old verse of the old song has not lost its melancholy meaning—

" Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play :
For some must watch, while some must sleep ;
Thus runs the world away."

Returning from one of my "inquiries" in the neighbourhood of a small town in a south-western county, I walked part of the way back with an old man in a strange long blue cloth dress coat, with enormous brass buttons, which had once been yellow, and top boots, the tops of which had once been yellow too. It was his Sunday dress, perhaps half a century, at least a quarter of a century, old. A tailor in a town in those parts told me that he had just seen a man come into that town with a coat on his back which he (the tailor) had made for him twenty-four years before. I could not at first guess what the strangely accoutred old man could be. He turned out to be a shoemaker. He

said that for *ready* money he could make a pair of labourer's shoes for nine shillings and sixpence, and get about two shillings and sixpence by the job. And even if in full work he could hardly make more than three pairs of such shoes in a week, which would bring him, if paid, but seven shillings and sixpence for his week's work. But he lost money, he said, by the agricultural labourers not paying him. They promised to pay at the rate of one shilling a week, but could not. He was often very ill off himself. He said "he was sure the Queen did not know how ill off the poor people were, or she would do something for them." Some had only one shilling a day or six shillings a week, some only five shillings a week. And the bread-tax was then upon them in all its oppressive force.

I will note here another recollection of that inquiry which had other difficulties besides the hostility of the farmers mentioned, I think, in the preceding section. I was walking along the road between Corfe Castle and Wareham, which last is separated from that part of Dorsetshire called the Isle of Purbeck by a small stream running into Poole Harbour, where, at a part of the road which lay between two high banks, I suddenly saw two

powerful men in the dress of sailors advancing towards me. I had in my pocket about fifty pounds which I had, just before I left London, drawn out of my bankers for my travelling expenses, and I had not so large an account at my bankers as to render the loss of this sum of money a matter of indifference to me. However, I resolved to make the best of it, and when the two sailors came close to me and said that they were travelling on foot from Liverpool to Poole, to seek for employment, I gave them a shilling, with which fortunately they appeared satisfied, thanked me, and continued their journey.

To return to the particular village before mentioned. Walking down hill towards this village some fifty or sixty years later than the day when Arthur Young walked up that hill in France, I encountered some sights and some scenes, which those witnessed by Arthur Young in France in that bygone time could hardly exceed in the materials they afforded for "taking the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt."

What is this? A cottage built of wood and without a chimney, the smoke ascending through what appears a large hole in the roof. The chimney fell down, I learned on inquiry, some time since,

and had not been rebuilt. The thatch of the roof had been extended over the space where the chimney was; and the smoke, occasionally accompanied by sparks of fire, found its way through as it could. So that, besides the greater danger of fire, the condition of the interior of the cottage was fully worse than in those cases in which the chimney was originally only a circular aperture in the roof. For here the efforts of the smoke to escape to upper air are rather more often unavailing, than where the original design of the cottage architect did not contemplate any chimney at all. I was informed that a deaf woman was in the house when the chimney fell in, and had only left the chimney corner a moment or two before the chimney tumbled down.

Soon after I came to another tenement in this village, which appeared to be undergoing some repairs. It was a cottage of two rooms, without a garden—rent thirty shillings a year. The tenant of it was a labourer, with seven shillings a week, and a wife and six children at home. The woman said she had lived there thirty years, and could never get any repairs done, except a tile now and then. Most of the cottages in the parish were thatched, but this one was tiled. The farmer to

whom she paid the rent always said he spoke to the college* which was the owner, but could not get them to do anything.

No repairs for thirty years! Corporations are said to have no souls. Here is an example—a proof indeed—of the truth of the saying. But though there are certain powers and rights which corporations have by law, I cannot find that they are entitled by law to have no souls—and no bowels of compassion. Stomachs they certainly have in fact, whether they have them in law or not. I therefore apprehend that this corporation cannot plead that they are entitled by law to feel no compassion for the sufferings which their tenants endure by reason of the entrances of the wind and the rain, the frost and the snow, through the “rents of ruin” which time has made in their hovels.

Whether their landlords were or were not entitled by law to plead that they had no souls, it seemed to go hard anyway with these poor people. For it did not appear that the advantages enjoyed by the other proprietor, the noble or most noble

* A college in one of the Universities which was the owner of this part of the parish with which this village was nearly co-extensive.

marquis, in the matter of soul, was attended by perceptible advantages to the poor cottagers. "He's a marquis indeed!" was the observation I heard on the spot. "He takes every thing out of it, and brings nothing into it. The Lord deliver us from such a marquis!"

I cannot say how the case might be in respect to any parish where this marquis might be resident. It is possible that he might be there as popular as he was unpopular here. The case is anyhow, at least, somewhat different where the proprietor is resident. It needs no very advanced stage in civilization for the preference of a flower-garden to a dunghill in front of one's house. It requires no very great amount of humanity to remove squalor, filth and extreme misery from under one's nose; to desire to see the cottages clustered round one's park gates, not merely neat and picturesque, but decently clean, commodious, and comfortable. A comparison of the cottages in certain localities near the owners' residences with those in certain other localities at a distance from such residences will occur to every one who has seen anything of the present state of England—at least, of its state some years ago. Sir John Falstaff declared that, when he was elevated to the peerage, he

should forswear sack, and live cleanly, as a nobleman should do. It is natural that a nobleman should not desire to have a slovenly unhandsome cottage come betwixt the wind and his nobility.

;/ The price of bread is always considerably higher in these places than in the neighbouring towns ; a fact which is partly accounted for by the number of bad debts met with by those who sell bread and flour. One man said he could not get paid, and gave up the trade. He said he lost about fifty pounds before he shut up his shop. Another man said the people had got between two and three hundred pounds in his debt. In truth, the public in those parts of the kingdom could not and did not live on their wages : and the above is only one of the ways in which those wages were eked out so as to enable them to keep body and soul together in the most miserable manner. As I went along, I observed another shop shut. The man who kept it, I was informed, had been ruined by bad debts, and went off in the night with all the goods he had left.

Nearly opposite this shut-up shop, getting over a stile, I found a footpath leading across a corner of what was once a park, through which had run a fine clear, rapid stream, well supplied with fine trout

—such as are met with in the Kennet, and such streams as you will find some pleasant as well as instructive talk about in Mr. Kingsley's delightful paper called "Chalk Stream Studies." The family, whose possession of this estate, however, was by no means ancient, had a house here once; which they occasionally visited. At such times no doubt the village bore a very different aspect from that which it wears now:—

"A merry place, 'tis said, in days of yore,
But something ails it now—the place is curst."

The stream still runs on, but no longer through a park. For the house is gone, not a trace of it remaining; the park ploughed up, though round the edge of it might still be seen the traces of the drive, in the circling avenue marked out by the trees still standing. The far older and stronger castle of the older and mightier lords of the place, has left some relics of its huge and frowning walls, which, if they seem to tell some broken tale of feudal tyranny in days long past, can hardly be suggestive of the picture of a more miserable population than that which now clusters round them, while they are suggestive of that high-spirited and warlike race who had set their seals to the Great Charter, and in securing their own

liberties against the encroachments of their kings, laid the foundation of the liberties of England, and thereby of the liberties of all mankind.

From the stile above mentioned there was a view of a house of considerable size, prettily situated, which an old woman informed me was the house of the clergyman, adding, "We don't have much good from he." The living is worth upwards of one thousand pounds a year; but the incumbent at that time did not appear to enjoy a large amount of popularity among his parishioners, who, on the other hand, extolled the virtues of a neighbouring squire, the labourers on whose property were much better off than those in this parish, most of them living rent free and having fuel found them by their landlord.

Here is a cottage a mere ruin. It is built of mud, supported by upright and cross pieces of timber, originally forming squares, but now distorted by time and neglect into irregular figures for which geometry has no name. Is it inhabited? Yes; and the woman in this hovel says that in the cold weather they pay two shillings a week out of their seven shillings a week for firing, and they have eight children. They have no garden, and she says their rent is one pound a year.

But a man now pointed out a cottage worse than

any of these that have been described, saying he could drive a horse and cart through it. And in truth he scarcely exaggerated when he said so. There were holes in the windows large enough to put both hands through ; and holes in some parts of the walls large enough to put the whole body through. The roof was also full of holes. The occupant of it said the rain ran in in a hundred places ; that they could not lie in their beds dry. A good many cases had been met with of families (generally those, too, in the coldest and worst dwellings) who had no blankets, even in that severe winter. And of those who had blankets, the best off had not more than two to a bed—frequently but one—while most people found three too few, and that too in houses made to keep out the cold, with doors, windows, and chimneys of very different construction from that of the majority of agricultural labourers' cottages. The family in this cottage of which I now speak had no blankets. The children (there were seven of them), some in rags and almost naked, were cowering round the embers of a fire on the hearth within the large chimney—the only sheltered spot in the cottage. One poor little thing, a boy about two years old, was playing among the embers, unconscious alike

of the dark fate of his race and his own. His little brother had been burnt to death only a short time before, while engaged as he now was.

These children had recently lost their mother—one consequence of which was the death by burning of the little boy. They were now under the care of their eldest sister, a girl about seventeen. Rather less than three weeks after this time on visiting this village again, I was informed that this girl was dead and buried. She had gone to a gentleman's house at a little distance to beg, and, standing about two hours in the cold and the wet, she caught a cold, which, from the state of the cottage, insufficient covering (there were, as I have said, no blankets), and the want of necessities, turned into a fever and carried her off in about ten days. She died raving mad. Her life had been short and miserable. Better to be in the grave than to go on living thus.

In cases of starvation, this is the usual termination of the melancholy process. "Towards the end," says Liebig ("Animal Chemistry," p. 26), "the particles of the brain begin to undergo the process of oxidation, and delirium, mania, and death close the scene."

I will not weary the reader with more of the

details of that day's work. Those already given may perhaps be considered more than enough. Whatever may be the condition of that village now, what has been said conveys, as far as it goes, a strictly accurate description of what it was at that time.

Ten years after my visit to the English village I have attempted to describe, it happened to me to pass a few weeks in a Scottish village. I made a few notes on the matters which in the Scottish village chiefly attracted my attention. It will be seen from what is put down in the following section of this chapter that the condition of the inhabitants of the Scottish village was better than that of the inhabitants of the English village, in so far as their cottages were not in ruins. But in other matters, such as their being obliged to eat bread made of damaged flour and to submit to their little crops being destroyed by the landlord's game—against which grievance they were totally without redress or remedy—their only remedy being to leave the land where they and their forefathers had dwelt for centuries—it may appear a little doubtful whether the people in the English village or those in the Scottish village were in the most unenviable condition. The people in the

Scottish village were, as to shelter from the weather, better off than the people in the English village, but they were under a landlord who, though sometimes called a religious or pious nobleman, appears from the facts to have been an oppressive and hard-hearted tyrant.

CHAPTER V.

SECTION III.

A SCOTTISH VILLAGE IN 1855.

THE Scottish village referred to, on which I have made a few notes, belonged, with all the surrounding country, to one of those Leviathan landholders, among some half-dozen of whom the greater part of Scotland is parcelled out, and who, unlike their English brother peers who profited by the plunder of the English Church lands at the Reformation in England, and rose at once from a humble station to be lords and knights, profess to trace their descent from kings and heroes of very remote times. I will not at present trouble the reader about those pedigrees, farther than to state that this village had once belonged to an Abbey, the ruins of which still remained in the condition in which they had been left at the Reformation in Scotland, and had come into the possession of the family of the present

proprietor some years after. Into the root of their title I do not inquire. It might be as good or even better than many other titles to Church property. Lord Byron was very proud of the possession of Newstead Abbey, and seems to have got into his head with much poring over his pedigree, some touch of the confusion which he ascribes to the Polish Count Palatine in *Mazeppa*, and to have satisfied himself that the Byrons of the sixteenth century were identical with the Buruns of the thirteenth century, of which identity there is no evidence.

This Scottish village afforded much matter, both from observation and reflection to any observing and reflecting Englishman. The first thing that naturally struck an Englishman was the contrast between it and the English villages—particularly the villages of the southern and south-western counties of England. The most striking contrast that first presented itself was the monotonous regularity of this Scottish village, as compared with the picturesque irregularity of many English villages. I will explain what I mean by monotonous regularity by stating that this village, though situated in a most picturesque country, was merely a collection of cottages, built of a sort of red sand-

stone—they had a few years before been hovels of clay and turf—placed close together, end to end, in rows forming the village street, resembling the rows of negro cabins on a planter's estate, where nothing is left to the individual will of the tenant, but he must squat in the one case as the slave owner, in the other as the laird bids him. Whereas everything that gives beauty to an English village springs from the circumstance of the individual will having been as free to select a spot for a dwelling as the oak on the village green to shoot out its boughs as nature prompted it.

I have in the preceding section quoted a few words from Sir Walter Scott's description of the village of Tully-Veolan. I will now quote a few words more. Sir Walter Scott, in describing the village of Tully-Veolan, says: "The village was more than half a mile long, the cottages being divided from each other by gardens, or yards, as the inhabitants called them, of different sizes." I can truly say, however, that such was not the case in this village of which I write—for the cottages were placed close together, without gardens or greensward between them and the road or village street, though many of them, perhaps all, may have

had a bit of ground at the back by way of garden or kailyard.

Another part of Scott's description of the village of Tully-Veolan, mentions the great number of useless dogs, and the story told of them by a French tourist who, wishing to find a reason for the number of dogs he saw, recorded as one of the national characteristics of Scotland, that the State maintained in each village a relay of curs, called *collies*, whose duty it was to chase the *chevaux de poste* (too starved and exhausted to move without such a stimulus) from one hamlet to another, till they drove them to the end of the stage. Travellers in Scotland now might not find the number of curs so great as described by the veracious French tourist; but Colonel Thompson related a curious story of the Scotch collies which he heard on his Free Trade expedition in Scotland. The country people used to be followed to church by their collie dogs, which were all put into an appointed place in the church by themselves; and the dogs knew by the change in the preacher's tone when he was winding up, and with one consent cried *Hoo!* in joy at their approaching liberation. It came into one preacher's head to try the experiment of imitating the tones



A Scottish Village in 1855.

of winding up, and then going on again. Which he did ; and the dogs made their *Hoo!* in the wrong place.

To return to this Scottish village. I obtained tolerably good lodgings at a house of two stories belonging to one of the principal shopkeepers in the village, whose wife, a good cook, and remarkably intelligent woman, attended to the lodgings.

One of the first things that attracted my attention was the badness of the bread procured from the village baker—the bread being sour from an unpleasant combination of bad flour and bad yeast. I therefore ate chiefly bread made by my landlady in the shape of flat cakes of moderate thickness. These cakes were, I think, called scones, the name given also in Scotland to barley cakes—but never to oat cakes, which are called bannocks. The reason given for the badness of the baker's bread was this : A combination or company of persons in the village enriched themselves by selling to the villagers damaged flour ; against which grievance and villany there was no redress, because, though the "great man" most probably did not know of this villanous proceeding, the poor people dared not complain for fear of these scoundrels' influence with him being used to ruin them, by getting

them turned out of their small tenements or holdings.

But this was but one of many evils incident to the condition of these Scotch villagers. The English squire is strict enough about the preservation of his game, and the English farmer often feels to his cost the consequences of such preservation. But this is nothing to what the Scottish inhabitants of this village—which is only an average example of a Scottish village—*ab uno disce omnes*—felt and suffered. They were as much attached by feeling to the soil, where their fathers had lived for many generations, as the villeins *regardant* were bound to the soil by the feudal law. It is, indeed, as I have heard some of them sorrowfully say, “a grievous oppression,” when the great landholder, who is the lord of the soil for miles round, tells them, if they complain of the all but total destruction in many cases, in some of the total destruction of their little crops by his game—that, if they do not like it, they may go elsewhere; and when this “great man’s” numerous gamekeepers, who with their guns on full cock, strut on the public highways with the airs of Prussian policemen, shoot the poor man’s favourite little dog, sitting inoffensively at its master’s door.

“Strange!” said an Englishman one day as he

eyed one of the Prussian policeman-like gamekeepers with a grim look—"Strange! that the descendants of the Scottish peasants who fought so hard and so successfully for liberty and independence at Bannockburn, should have gotten so little of what their forefathers bled for. I dislike this country, except for some of its scenery, and its pure air and clear streams. But the condition of these villagers reminds me painfully of the treatment of the people of India by their native oppressors—treatment which, as a soldier and administrator, I have always done my best to improve. What business have these descendants of cow-stealers and robbers of Church property with such enormous domains? We might say to them—'Bruce we know, and Douglas we know, but who are you? I should have taken off my hat to Bruce, because he was Bruce; and I take it off to Wellington, because he is Wellington.' But these cow-stealers and Church-robbers! Ugh!"

One day the Englishman referred to was walking along the road leading to the village, with his fishing-rod in his hand, when an open carriage overtook and passed him. Two men were seated in it, one of whom being seated with his back to the horses, the man on foot had from that circumstance a better view of his face. It was a face that

appeared to indicate that the owner of it considered himself a person of very great importance. The expression of this man's face said as plainly as if the words had been written there in characters larger and far less ambiguous than those of an Act of Parliament, that he considered himself as being not only absolute master of all the land for miles on miles round about, but also absolute master of all the human beings who had the misfortune to live on that land. There was something in the haughty, insolent, despotic look of this man which roused the Englishman's combativeness. And as the latter returned his haughty look, which seemed to demand what right a "gutterblood" had to be walking on his domain with a fishing-rod in his hand, there was something in the expression of his features that seemed to be new to the rural magnate, accustomed as he was to domineer among dependents and the smaller lairds who looked upon him as a small god—a very small one indeed—and to rouse in him an emotion of rage, mixed with some other emotions he did not much care to analyze—inasmuch as an emotion very much akin to fear lay coiled up among them.

The carriage rolled on, and, by a turn of the road, was soon out of sight. And the pedestrian

walked on too, wondering who those men might be in the carriage that had just passed him. Presently he met the clergyman of the parish, the minister as he was there called, and, as he had a slight acquaintance with him, he stopped and asked him whose carriage it was that had passed him, and which the minister coming in the opposite direction had met.

“That’s the Lord ——’s carriage.”

“Who’s the Lord ——?”

“The eldest son of that right honourable, as well as right worthy, and pious nobleman, the Earl of ——.”

“He is the owner of the land about here, is he not?”

“Ay, he is so.”

“Did not his family get possession of it at the Reformation, when they got the lands of that Abbey?”

“Ay, they did so.”

“I have read some story about roasting a man till he signed some deeds.”

“His lordship and his noble ancestors were aye a very pious family; and had just a perfect abhorrence of that man of sin, the Pope of Rome, and all his works. May be then it’s not unlike that

they might show their zeal for the true religion by taking vigorous measures to get the lands out of such hands."

"That," said the Englishman, "is rather a new view of the matter. But as to the change of hands of the Abbey lands. I have my doubts whether a change might not have been made of rather a different kind. But might I ask which of the two seated in the carriage was Lord ——?"

"His Lordship sat with his back to the horses."

"And the other who sat with his face to the horses?"

"Oh, that was the Earl of ——, a rich English nobleman, the eldest son and heir of the great Marquis ——."

The Scotch have generally a vast respect for English noblemen, whom they assume to be *all* rich, as they have a notion that England is a rich country. And the English return the compliment by the prodigious respect they have for those Scottish magnates who are reported to be the owners of a great extent of country, and in some cases to have a very large rental. .

"You seem to think, Sir," said the Englishman, "that the ancestor of this worthy and pious nobleman, the Earl of ——, did well in getting these

lands by any means out of the power of the man of sin, the Pope. I am no admirer of the Pope and his works any more than yourself; but if you will permit me, I should like to ask you a question or two. I am a stranger here, and I naturally feel some curiosity about things that are strange to me."

"I shall be very ready to answer any question in my power to answer, Sir," replied the minister.

"Well, then," continued the Englishman, "if you will consider merely the temporal condition of the inhabitants of this village, for as to their spiritual condition there cannot be a doubt of its superiority under such a pastor as yourself, do you think it was better or worse when the Abbot of that Abbey was their landlord than it is now when the worthy and pious Earl of —— is their landlord?"

This question seemed to puzzle the worthy minister a little, as opening up certain points of view which had never before been presented to his mind. After a short pause, he replied—

"Better or worse? How can it be a question, Sir, when in those days the poor people were little if any better than benighted heathens, without either preaching or teaching that had the smallest

savour of the true Gospel, or the pure unadulterated Word of God in it?"

"I excepted their spiritual condition expressly from my question," said the Englishman. "No doubt as to their spiritual condition they were kept in great darkness and ignorance. But I have always understood that the Roman Catholic clergy were easy landlords; and I have read in your Scottish histories that the nobles and gentry who got possession of the Church lands were the reverse of easy landlords. And now I see here a landlord feeding his game upon the little crops of his poor tenants, and I am informed that when they humbly petition for redress their petitions are treated with the disregard that a beast of prey might be expected to show for the petition of the animal he preyed on. Is this just? Is this merciful? Is this the conduct becoming a pious nobleman?"

"Sir," replied the minister, "in obedience to the command—judge not that ye be not judged—I would be far from presuming to judge a great and pious nobleman as respects this matter of game—though even I myself in respect of my small bit of glebe land have been a sufferer in no small degree, and moreover I did even once venture

to present a humble memorial to his lordship on the subject, and thereby, I fear, did incur his lordship's displeasure. For great men, Sir, do not easily brook any opposition to their will."

"So much the worse for the great men themselves in the long run," said the Englishman. "It is one of the greatest advantages of a free country, with a free Parliament, and a free press, to protect great men, as you call them, against themselves. Some of the greatest men that ever lived, Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance, have gone to destruction because they were without such protection. As for these small tyrants, such as your landlord here, you see what monkey tricks they play when left to themselves. And, indeed, I believe they lose the little intelligence they may have had from nature, and descend in the scale of being so as to form the connecting link between man and the baboon."

The Englishman would not have gone so far in the expression of his opinions, for he was always careful not to say unnecessarily what might hurt the feelings of any person unless such person, by having been the aggressor, rendered an attack on him a mere act of self-defence; but he saw that the worthy minister, though he might

consider it his duty to speak of the great landholder with a certain guarded tone of respect, was greatly displeased at the destruction of his own and his parishioners' crops by the landlord's game, and by the unfeeling manner in which redress was refused.

"Now, Sir," continued the Englishman, taking a small volume out of his pocket, "with your permission I will read to you a short passage out of a History of Scotland I have here in my hands, a book written by a man from whom, though in common with the rest of the world I admire his genius, I differ totally on many points, and in none more than in his admiration of your Stuart kings. The writer I am about to quote is Sir Walter Scott; and the admission of gross injustice and rapacity on the part of your nobility is the more important as made by a writer whose bias was quite as aristocratical and as much against the Scottish democratical Church as that of Thucydides against the Athenian democracy; and this passage, therefore, bears some analogy to a passage in the eight book of the History of Thucydides."

"Sir Walter Scott was no friend to the Kirk of Scotland, and he has done his best to ridicule the

poor persecuted covenanters, and to do honour to their base and cruel persecutors."

"I don't say a word in defence of his worship of such heroes as Claverhouse—a man whom I don't even much admire as a soldier—and who, in every other respect, can only be an object of detestation for his tyranny and cruelty—cowardly cruelty too, in order to establish the despotism of such despicable tyrants as Charles the Second and his brother James. These were one set of your native oppressors. But what say you to this description, which I have reason to know is borne out by the best historical evidence, of the other set of your native oppressors, consisting of such right worthy and pious noblemen' as this Earl of ——?"

He then read the following passage:—

"It remained to dispose of the wealth lately enjoyed by the Catholic clergy, who were supposed to be possessed of half of the revenue of Scotland, so far as it arose from land. Knox and the other Reformed clergy had formed a plan for the decent maintenance of a National Church out of these extensive funds, and proposed, that what might be deemed more than sufficient for this purpose should be expended upon hospitals, schools, universities,

and places of education. But the Lords, who had seized the revenues of the Church, were determined not to part with the spoil they had obtained; and those whom the preachers had found most active in destroying Popery, were wonderfully cold when it was proposed to them to surrender the lands they had seized upon for their own use. The plan of John Knox was, they said, a 'devout imagination,' a visionary scheme, which showed the goodness of the preacher's intentions, but which it was impossible to carry into practice. In short, they retained by force the greater part of the Church revenues for their own advantage."

"Ay," said the minister, "John Knox's scheme was a good and honest one, though the Lords who had gotten the Church lands might call it visionary."

"I quite agree with you. The conduct of John Knox in this was that of a wise statesman as well as of an honest man; the conduct of those Lords was the conduct of a band of robbers. A pack of greater ruffians, I believe, never appeared upon earth, in any age or country. The persons who got hold of the Church lands in England were mean men of the grade of lackeys and cooks. But the Scotch plunderers were to a man pre-eminent,

even in that age of bad men, for ferocity, treachery, and cruelty. The chief of them, James Douglas, Earl of Morton, a man of a ferocious, treacherous, and cruel disposition, brought a stain on the name of Douglas of a peculiar kind ; a stain too that shows that the morality of the nobles of that age had fallen below the level of the morality of two or three centuries back. This Morton surrendered to the Queen of England the unfortunate Earl of Northumberland, who, having been unsuccessful in his rebellion in England, had fled for refuge into Scotland, which had always before been a safe and hospitable place of refuge for those whom misfortune or political faction had driven into exile. What aggravated the blackness of the transaction, was that when Morton himself had been forced to fly to England, on account of his share in Rizzio's murder, he had been courteously received and protected by the unhappy nobleman whom he now delivered up to the vengeance of the Tudor Queen. 'It was,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'an additional and aggravating circumstance, that it was a Douglas who betrayed a Percy ; and when the annals of their ancestors were considered, it was found that while they presented many acts of open hostility, many instances of close and firm alliance, they never till now had afforded an example of any

act of treachery exercised by the one family against the other. To complete the infamy of the transaction, a sum of money was paid to the Regent Morton on this occasion, which he divided with Douglas of Lochleven.' There are other cases of cruelty, and treachery, mixed up with cant and hypocrisy, recorded by Sir Walter Scott, upon the authority of contemporary evidence of the most authentic kind, which prove that the heroes of your Reformation in Scotland may rank with the worst men of the worst times; that they may vie with Ezzelino in ferocity, with Borgia in treachery and cruelty, and with Louis the Eleventh in rapacity, in hypocrisy, and in baseness."

"But you do not include in this description John Knox and the other preachers?"

"No—I mean the laymen—and of those, not the people generally, but the laymen who called themselves of noble, or, at least, of ancient families. And, my dear Sir, when we remember that that miscreant, Louis the Eleventh, was the first who assumed the title of 'Most Christian King;' we ought to reflect that a man may obtain the appellation of a 'worthy and pious nobleman,' without possessing any very just title to it. I think that Virgil's hero, 'pious Æneas,' is as pretty a scoundrel as you often meet with."

CHAPTER VI.

FREE TRADE AND THE CHANNEL TUNNEL.

OF the four Free Trade advocates mentioned in the preceding pages, two, General Thompson and Mr. Villiers, were, as far as I know, opposed to the Channel Tunnel; two, Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, would seem from the following statement to have been in favour of it.

On the 17th of August, 1883, a general meeting of the Submarine Continental Railway Company was held at the Cannon Street Hotel, to receive a report from the directors, and for special business. Sir E. W. Watkin, the Chairman of the Company, presided. The Chairman said:—

“The Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament to whom Her Majesty’s Government referred the question of the Channel Tunnel, have by a majority expressed their opinion against proceeding for the present with legislation.”

The Chairman in the course of his remarks said :—

“If any supposed for a moment that they meant to slacken their efforts to attain their object they were very much mistaken. A cause which had the advocacy of the late Prince Consort, of Mr. Cobden, of the Marquis of Lansdowne, of Lord Aberdare, and of John Bright, was a cause which no man need be ashamed to be associated with.”

The Chairman also said :—

“There was no doubt that they had succeeded in creating in this country a distinct party of men in favour of the construction of the tunnel, and in addition they had associated the question indissolubly with the name of peace.”

It unfortunately sometimes happens that the persons who make most stir with the professed intention of promoting peace, do not adopt the most obvious course to the attainment of that object.

According to this statement of Sir E. W. Watkin, the Channel Tunnel had the advocacy of the late Prince Consort and of Mr. Cobden. If we are to adopt any great undertaking not upon our own knowledge and judgment, but upon the authority of others, those on whose authority we are to act should be men whose judgment in great affairs had been often tried and never found wanting; in civil as well as military affairs it should resemble that of the great English general, of whom it has been said that

there was but "one human being who was able to mislead that far-sighted and sure-footed judgment."

Now, with all respect for the Prince Consort and for Mr. Cobden, I do not feel myself under any obligation to accept the opinion of the Prince Consort or the opinion of Mr. Cobden, that Sir E. W. Watkin shall efface the insular character of Great Britain and place it in precisely the same relation to France that Germany is. Such a proposal indicates an amount of arrogance and presumption that reminds us of the extravagant assumptions of an Oriental tyrant or a Roman emperor. Speculating traders think of nothing but filling their pockets. But there are other things to be thought of besides raising the dividends of railway companies, when the price of the rise may be a nation's ruin. A glance at the map will show that if the English Channel be filled up, London will be within an easier distance of Paris than Berlin, and when the cry of "to London" shall arise, as in 1870 the cry "to Berlin" arose, England may not have the good fortune to have such a general as Moltke, and such an army as Moltke had organized.

Whether or not it was the desire and the design of the Prince Consort to plunge England into the Crimean War, I do not presume to say. A writer,

whose letters on the subject of the interference of the Crown with the Cabinet, originally published in a newspaper had, when published in a collected form, in 1878 reached the twentieth thousand, says:—

“Those who remember the Crimean War, may also perhaps remember that the immediate cause of it, so far as we are concerned, was the interpretation attached by Russia to the Vienna Note, after it had been accepted by all parties except Turkey. A despatch from Count Nesselrode made it clear that Russia understood the Note in the sense which the Turkish Government alleged it was capable of bearing—a sense different from that in which it had been accepted by the other Powers. This difficulty might have been overcome by further negotiation, but the cry went forth that Russia had tried to deceive us, and the indignation roused by Russia’s supposed treachery made war inevitable. We learn now that this was the court view. As soon as Count Nesselrode’s despatch was made known we are told that ‘not an hour was lost by the Queen and Prince,’ in making Lord Aberdeen aware of their views as to the course now to be adopted. It is no surprise to be told that their views prevailed, and that the arguments which dropped from the Royal pen were ‘adopted and carried out in detail by Lord Clarendon in a despatch to Sir George Hamilton Seymour, at St. Petersburg, on the 30th of September.’ In a letter to Baron Stockmar, two days after this communication of the Queen’s views to the Cabinet, the Prince referring to Russia, speaks of ‘the cloven foot,’ of the ‘cat let out of the bag,’ of the Vienna Note as ‘a trap’ set for us, with the connivance of Austria, and of the folly of acting as if our anta-

gonists were 'honourable men.' This was the cue given at once to the Cabinet, to the nation, and to as many as Baron Stockmar chose to acquaint with the 'views' of the British Court. The change in the temper of the nation was as sudden as a transformation scene, and we were irrevocably committed to war. . . . The scheme for enlisting foreigners, which got us into such a scrape with the United States, was of the Prince's suggesting. The Cabinet eyed it with suspicion at first, but ended by adopting it, as is duly noted to the Prince's glorification."*

All this is now before the British nation, and the nation can judge how far the Prince Consort's advocacy of the Channel Tunnel is a guarantee that the Channel Tunnel is likely to be a powerful element of good, and not a powerful element of evil to the island of Great Britain. A man can have but one country. An Englishman looks upon England from an Englishman's point of view. A German looks upon England from a German's point of view; and as the Channel Tunnel would seem to do little more than place England and France on the same footing as Germany and France are, the German sees no objection to the Channel Tunnel. But I do not think that the Englishmen of the last quarter of the nineteenth century will submit to be governed by Germans.

* "The Crown and the Cabinet," pp. 37, 38.

It is natural that an Englishman should desire the prosperity of England. It is natural that a German should desire the prosperity of Germany. A German may desire to make war on Russia, fancying he sees some advantage to Germany in such a proceeding, while an Englishman seeing no advantage to England in a war with Russia, may not desire to make such a war.

Indeed, if Sir W. E. Watkin were to succeed in his scheme of a Channel Tunnel, matters would be very considerably altered for the better as regards the relations of Germany towards France, inasmuch as France would then have another next neighbour to quarrel with, which next neighbour might offer subjects of competition as well worth fighting for as Strasburg and Metz. Instead of having a pacific tendency this Channel Tunnel would carry us back to the time when we were burthened with the cost of fortifications and a garrison for Calais. Assuming that we should not resume our old desire to possess Calais, we should be by no means safe in assuming that the French would not desire to possess Dover, as some of their political writers express a desire to possess or to regain Strasburg and Metz. I know nothing farther respecting the Prince Consort's and Mr. Cobden's advocacy of the

Channel Tunnel, than the statement of Sir W. E. Watkin quoted in a former page. I know nothing of the reasons for such a Tunnel which the Prince Consort and Mr. Cobden may have given. From the admitted general benevolence of both, it may be inferred that they considered the Tunnel as likely to have a tendency to produce peace and not to produce war. But it is given to few, very few, if any, of the sons of men, to foresee the proximate far less the distant and remote consequences of human acts. The character of Mr. Cobden was energetic and sanguine. These two qualities were most important in the work he had to do in the Anti-Corn Law battle. I have seen Mr. Cobden, and that too when he was within less than two years of victory, almost inclined to think the struggle hopeless.

But the sanguine character of mind which Mr. Cobden possessed is not altogether a safe guide in such speculations as the Channel Tunnel, nor is it in the large questions of peace and war, of foreign policy, of the principle of non-intervention in which Mr. Cobden engaged after the settlement of the Corn Law question. The editor of his speeches says in the preface, that Mr. Cobden said that war is never desired by a people, but by politicians and military men, whose ambition and cupidity are fired

by the prospect of advancement or profit. To show how difficult it is to get at truth, I will quote a letter of Mr. Cobden to me, dated "Midhurst, 25th November 1858." Mr. Cobden says:—

"Since we last met, the war with Russia occurred, and I confess it tended rather to modify my opinion as to the aristocratic origin of all our wars. I watched very closely the forces at work in carrying us into that war, and I did not find that the aristocratic element predominated. The House of Commons was far less warlike than the people. Talking to Lord Aberdeen one day about the origin of the war, he said it was the press that prevented him from keeping the peace. Has it not always been so? I suspect that the newspapers are far more powerful now than ever, and that they are gaining upon the power of the orators of whom you hold so unfavourable an opinion. As a general rule, I think, great orators have done quite as much harm as good. They have this to be said for them, that they are a sort of guarantee in parliamentary government that we are not governed by downright fools. It by no means insures our being under the rule of honest men or wise statesmen."

Mr. Cobden died on the 2nd of April, 1865, more than ten years before the publication of Sir Theodore Martin's third volume of the Life of the Prince Consort. Consequently Mr. Cobden had not, in forming his opinion respecting the origin of the Crimean War, the assistance which he would have derived from that third volume. When Lord

Aberdeen said to Mr. Cobden that it was the press that prevented him from keeping the peace, he is not to be supposed to have communicated to Mr. Cobden all that he knew respecting the origin of the war. The difficulty arising from Count Nesselrode's despatch as to the sense attached by Russia to the Vienna Note, after it had been accepted by all parties except Turkey—a sense different from that in which it had been accepted by the other Powers, “might,” says the writer* before quoted, “have been overcome by further negotiation, but the cry went forth that Russia had tried to deceive us, and the indignation roused by Russia's supposed treachery made war inevitable.” I need not repeat the words before quoted, but what is the conclusion that follows from all this? By “the cry went forth” is meant what Lord Aberdeen said to Mr. Cobden that it was the press that prevented Lord Aberdeen from keeping the peace. Who set on the press? It would be strange if it should appear that two of the advocates of Sir W. E. Watkins's Channel Tunnel were one intentionally the other unintentionally among the chief promoters of the Crimean War. •

* “The Crown and the Cabinet,” p. 37.

It will be necessary to make a careful examination of a work published by Mr. Cobden in April, 1853, which I have no doubt was read by the Czar Nicholas and had great influence in determining him on war by leading him to imagine that England had really fallen into the condition described in the words of a French Vice-Admiral which I will quote—a condition such that the French or any other foreigner had only to effect a landing in order to drive the English before them like a flock of sheep and plunder and insult them to any extent that might please the new conquerors.

Mr. Cobden would not, it may be assumed, take a German's view of a Channel Tunnel, but he was not altogether unlikely to take a view more favourable to France than an average Englishman would do.

In March, 1853, Mr. Cobden published "1793 and 1853, in three letters," in the preface to the Library Edition of which he says:—

"I have been charged with an anachronism in having designated the hostilities which terminated in 1815 as the war of 1793. . . . It is true that there were brief suspensions of hostilities at the truce of Amiens, and during Bonaparte's short sojourn at Elba; but even if it were clear that Napoleon's ambition put an end to the peace, it would prove nothing but that he had by the ordinary workings of the moral law been

in the meantime raised into a retributive agent for the chastisement of those who were the authors of the original war."

In this passage Mr. Cobden has, no doubt unintentionally, misrepresented facts. This arose from Mr. Cobden's having read in Hansard the debates in both Houses of Parliament on the war with France from 1791 to 1796, but apparently not having carried his investigation beyond 1796. He thus concludes that England was the aggressor throughout the war till 1815, having been the aggressor in 1793. Whereas, in 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte having obtained the command of the army of Italy assumed a policy of a universally aggressive character, which Mr. Cobden has apparently overlooked and given Bonaparte credit for virtues which he did not possess.

Mr. Cobden says (p. 11):—

"If you would really understand the motives with which we embarked upon the last French war, you must turn to Hansard, and read the debates in both Houses of Parliament upon the subject from 1791 to 1796. But there must be a very precise and accurate attention to dates, in order to understand the subject in hand. Our business lies with the interval from 1789, when the Constituent Assembly of France met, till 1793, when war commenced between England and France."

Now, if Mr. Cobden had continued his careful study of Hansard beyond 1796, he could not have failed to perceive that *in* and *after* 1796 the situation changed prodigiously. I think he could not have failed to be forcibly impressed by passage in the debates of both Houses of Parliament in 1800, particularly with the passage in Pitt's speech in the House of Commons, on the 3rd February 1800.

"If we look," Pitt says, "at the catalogue of the breaches of treaty, of the acts of perfidy, which are precisely commensurate with the number of treaties made by the republic (for I have sought in vain for any one which it has made and which it has not broken); if we trace the history of them all or if we select those which have been accompanied by the most atrocious cruelty, the name of Bonaparte will be found allied to more of them than that of any other in the history of the crimes and miseries of the last ten years."

Mr. Cobden's statement that England was the aggressor throughout the whole war, instead of only for the first three years, is contradicted point-blank by a French writer of authority. "The war," this writer says, "which England was waging against us, so iniquitous at the beginning, had become, thanks to our aggressive policy, a guarantee and a protection to small states."*

* Lamfrey, vol. ii., p. 81.

It is clear, then, that the France of 1796 was not the France of 1792. The change might have come even if the man had not come, but since 1792 a man had appeared in the revolutionary armies of France, whose talents for war would alone have made him powerful. But he possessed also an art in deceiving those with whom he negotiated, which bore a certain resemblance to that of Cæsar Borgia, who is said to have had a joviality and apparent simplicity of manner which, notwithstanding his often proved perfidy, amused men and put them off their guard, throwing them perpetually into his trap. His talents for war and his talents for deceiving mankind had raised this man to a great height of power; of power so great that the British Parliament was perhaps the only place in Europe where men dared to speak out their real opinions respecting him and his deeds.

It may be difficult to steer the middle course between those whom Mr. Cobden designates panic-mongers* and those whom others might designate confidence-mongers. We have all heard of the confidence-trick, and most of us have met with the man who while winking at his own cleverness

* "1793 and 1853," p. 58.

has run his head against a lamp-post. The letter of the Duke of Wellington to Sir John Burgoyne appeared in 1847, when Louis Philippe was on the throne, and has been, says Mr. Cobden, "the text-book for panic-mongers ever since."* It is rather singular that the brotherly love-mongers, and not the panic-mongers, are now the advocates of increased armaments—for there cannot be a doubt that a Channel Tunnel will infallibly lead to enormously increased armaments.

It is not unreasonable to require from any man who has given an opinion in favour of a Channel Tunnel, some satisfactory evidence that the man has manifested a sure-footed prescience in other matters of such importance that they concern the life or death of a nation. Mr. Cobden appears to take for granted that the least symptom of distrust is unworthy of a civilized nation, such as England esteems herself to be; and that to borrow the language of a letter of Sir William Molesworth which Mr. Cobden reprints (p. 80), "the French are as civilized as ourselves—in some respects intellectually our superiors." Well, what of that? I suppose Napoleon Bonaparte was intellectually

* "1793 and 1853," p. 58.

the superior of most men. But did that prevent him from being a public robber, whose acts of perfidy were commensurate with the number of treaties made by him? And, further, Sir William Molesworth says that the French "possess a constitutional government; that the love of peace, and the determination to preserve peace, have given to the King of the French, a constant majority in the Chambers." I was always under the impression that it was something of a different kind, rather concerned with patronage than peace, that gave Louis Philippe his majority in the Chambers; and as for the love of peace which Mr. Cobden and Sir William Molesworth set forth as so violent a passion among Frenchmen, I will quote presently from the French *Enquête Parlementaire* of November, 1849, the opinion of a French Vice-Admiral, who appears to an ordinary observer to have rather more of the love of war than of the love of peace, of which Sir William Molesworth attributes to him a love so ardent.

Mr. Cobden appears to consider the letter of the Duke of Wellington to Sir John Burgoyne on the National Defences of Great Britain, as the production of a man whose nervous system had been

weakened by age. Mr. Cobden says ("1793 and 1853," p. 59):—

"Sometimes the strongest part of our nature, which may have been subjected to the greatest strain, declines the first. In the Duke's case, his nervous system, his "iron" characteristic gave way. He who at forty was incapable of fear, at eighty was subject to almost infantine alarms."

Mr. Cobden, though he does not absolutely profess the non-resistance principle, appears to place great reliance on the increase of commercial industry in France. He also quotes (pp. 79, 80) a letter addressed by Sir William Molesworth, January 17, 1848, to the editor of *The Spectator* London newspaper, in which the writer says:—

"You say that the next attack on England will probably be without notice. Good God! can it be possible that you, whom I ranked so high among the public instructors of this nation—that you consider the French to be ruffians, Pindarees, free-booters—that you believe it necessary to keep constant watch and ward against them? Are you not aware that the French are as civilized as ourselves. Have you forgotten that they have passed through a great social revolution, which has equalized property, abolished privileges, and converted the mass of the people into thrifty and industrious men, to whom war is hateful, and the conscription detestable?"

This letter of Sir William Molesworth, which expresses indignation at the idea of its being

necessary to keep watch and ward against the French bears date, January 17, 1848. By the end of 1849, the French Government would seem to be acting in a manner not quite calculated to justify the effusion of brotherly love exhibited towards them by Mr. Cobden and Sir William Molesworth. At least, this inference appears to result from the following "evidence of Vice-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars," given in the French *Enquête Parlementaire* nominated in November, 1849:—

"While speaking of war, I have something to say, which I think important and well-founded, and which I am the more convinced of, because the English themselves, good judges of the dangers they are exposed to, admit it. The brochure of Prince de Joinville produced a great effect in the maritime world, especially in England, and was the cause of very energetic measures being taken for the defence of her coasts. In my opinion, though England may have erected fortifications, a disembarkation is always possible there, and for it we should not require line-of-battle ships. We should only require seventy corvettes, and some *avisos* of auxiliary steam-power. With these means, without the English having power to resist, we could throw seventy thousand men on the coast of England. All invasions of England have been crowned with success. She is not prepared for a land war as we could make it. The English have not the warrior spirit; and if we have war with them, we should have but one thing to do, that is, a landing."

It might be expected that a Frenchman's opinion of Englishmen would differ somewhat from Englishmen's opinion of themselves; but with so many opportunities of knowing the fighting qualities of Englishmen, one would hardly have looked in a paper printed under the authority of the representatives of the French nation for such an opinion as that which has been just quoted. It is in the evidence of the French *Enquête Parlementaire*, nominated in November, 1849, and it is accompanied by the evidence of eighty-nine witnesses, flag and other officers, appended to the French report. All this shows that the French Government of that day contemplated a sudden attack upon England—an attack to which the Channel Tunnel would, it may be supposed, have afforded extraordinary facilities. And this took place very soon after the fine frenzy of Sir William Molesworth's indignation at the possibility of any public instructor, like *The Spectator*, "considering the French to be ruffians, Pindarees, freebooters." "Good God!" exclaims Sir William, like the friend of humanity in Canning's Knife Grinder, in a transport of Republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy, "can it be possible?" And one is inclined so far to follow Sir William's example, as to apply his

exclamation not to *The Spectator*, but to the French Government of 1849, for publishing such opinions, for Vice-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars' utterance is opinion, not evidence. Sir William Molesworth did good service in the matter of the British Colonies, and Mr. Cobden did good service in the matter of the British Corn Laws; but the confidence which they express in the maintenance of peace, is the confidence rather of a dreamer than a statesman.

Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who appeared upon the scene two or three years after the Duke of Wellington's letter to Sir John Burgoyne, commenced his career by strangling a nation in the night-time.

Mr. Kinglake says :*—

"From 1836 until 1848, Prince Louis had never ceased to be obscure, except by bringing upon himself the laughter of the world; and his election to the chair of the Presidency had only served to bring upon him a more constant outpouring of the scorn and sarcasm which Paris knows how to bestow. Even the suddenness and perfect success of the blow struck in the night between the 1st and the 2nd of December, 1851, had failed to make Paris think of him with gravity. But it was otherwise after three o'clock on the 4th of December; and it happened that his most strenuous adversaries were those who best served his cause; for the more they strove to

* Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, 5th edit., vol. i., pp. 286-289.

show that he and he alone had planned and ordered the massacre, the more completely they relieved him from the disqualification which had hitherto made it impossible for him to become the supreme ruler of France. Before the night closed in on the 4th of December, he was sheltered safe from ridicule by the ghastly heaps on the Boulevards."

According to this view Paris had to pay somewhat dear for the indulgence of its powers of ridicule. I will quote here the narrative of an eyewitness, which Mr. Kinglake had not seen—at least it was only published recently.

On the morning of the 4th of December, 1851, the streets of Paris were deserted, and bills were posted recommending the inhabitants to remain in their houses, and stating that every one who resisted Louis Napoleon Bonaparte would be "shot." Something strange and terrible seemed about to happen—the more unexpected as the city where the bills were posted was the most luxurious city, the French would say, the most civilized city in Europe, in the world. On the morning of that 4th of December, 1851, large bodies of French troops, of men in military garb, garb resembling that worn by men professedly raised, embodied and disciplined to defend their country against foreign armed enemies, suddenly appeared on the Boulevards of Paris, and fired upon unarmed men, and upon

women and children—fired at those who were in the streets, and at those who were at the windows of houses. As there is nothing in London corresponding to this Paris Boulevards, I can only attempt to give those who have not seen the Paris Boulevards some idea of the proceeding of one regiment which I am about to place before them by saying that it was somewhat as if a regiment of Life Guards or Horse Guards were suddenly led into Trafalgar Square, and the Colonel at the head of the regiment was heard to say “we are going to sweep away everything.” If what happened in the Paris Boulevards had been done in Trafalgar Square, and in the streets leading from Trafalgar Square to Westminster Abbey, the man who did it would probably—long before the expiration of the twenty years during which the author of the *coup d'état* of December, 1851, reigned in France—have had to walk out of the same window at Whitehall, from which a man walked somewhat more than two hundred years before to the scaffold for having murdered large numbers of Englishmen, as this Corsican, or of whatever race or nation of mankind he came, murdered large numbers of French men, women, and children.

The present Paris correspondent of *The Daily*

News thus writes in *The Daily News* of Tuesday, December 16, 1879:—

“As an eye-witness of the massacre of the Boulevards on December 4th, I cannot allow Marshal Canrobert’s version of that historical day to pass uncontradicted. I don’t quote the histories of Victor Hugo, Kinglake, and others, but merely recount what I did see. At that time I was not the correspondent of *The Daily News*, but was an intimate friend of the gentleman who then filled the post. At his request, it being feared that postal communication would be stopped, I started for London on December 2nd, writing with a pencil in the train. I returned to Paris on the morning of the 4th, when I found the streets deserted, and bills posted recommending the inhabitants to remain in their houses and stating—lugubrious threat, but too soon to be realized—that every one who resisted the behests of Louis Napoleon would be “shot.” I walked from the Northern Railway Station to the Rue de la Paix, seeing scarcely anybody in the streets. To refresh myself for want of sleep I went into an establishment, no longer existing, at the corner of the Rue de la Paix and the Boulevards, called Les Bains de Venus, to take a warm bath. On coming out I found a terrorized crowd in the gangway, and was told that it was unsafe to go into the streets. I said I must go, and pushed my way through. On emerging I found myself just at the head of a regiment of cavalry whose rear, extending along the Rue de la Paix, reached beyond the column of the Place Vendome. I heard a youthful chubby-faced Lieutenant-Colonel say, and I shall never forget the words, ‘Nous allons tout balayer.’ [We are going to sweep away everything.] And, he added, looking significantly at

me, 'Si on vent traverser, piques.' [If any one crosses the street, spear him.] Little suspecting what horrors were about to ensue, I was not greatly frightened by this menace, upon which the nearest sergeant, with a halberd, did not act, and without quickening my pace, I walked to my then lodging, a few doors off, No. 29, Boulevard des Capucins. From my windows I saw the regiment to which I had heard the order given to *tout balayer* charge down the Boulevards des Italiens as far as Tortoni's, where there was nothing to *balayer* at all. Then they halted, and each soldier drawing his carbine, his horse going at a walk, fired deliberately into every house right and left, killing servants and children at the windows. I did not see the river of blood on the slope of the Boulevard Montmartre, attested by irrefragable evidence, and I was not present when a gun under Canrobert's command made a gigantic round hole in the Maison Sallandranze. But I did see the next day, when terror had done its work, every house for the space of a mile on the Boulevards from Tortoni's to the Porte St. Martin, spotted like a plum pudding, from ground-floor to sixth story, with bullet marks.

"This was done in pursuance of the diabolical orders from the Elysée, to strike terror into the rich bourgeois quarters, where there was no resistance, in order that the rumour of their submission might discourage the St. Antoine faubourg and other arrondissements where there were barricades. Marshal Canrobert calculates on short memories when he pretends that the massacre of the Boulevards, in which he was a principal actor, was only the haphazard work of a few drunken or excited soldiers."

Mr. Cobden thus describes the first impressions

produced in England, by what took place in France at the beginning of December, 1851:—

“Are there no symptoms that we have spirits amongst us who want not the will, if the power and occasion be afforded, to play the part of Burke in our day? He excited the indignation of his countrymen against a republic which had decapitated a king; now our sympathies are roused in behalf of a republic which has been strangled by an emperor.”

Mr. Cobden's argument which follows, namely, “that the French nation are the legitimate tribunal for disposing of the grievance,” and what he says a page or two after that “the French people, for reasons best known to themselves, acquiesced in his rule,” amount to this, that they could never have got rid of the tyrant who had got upon their shoulders, like the old man of the sea upon the shoulders of Sinbad, unless they had received assistance from without from the genius of Moltke, for whom the night-strangler who inherited neither the genius nor the valour of the great man whose name he bore, was no match. I agree with Mr. Cobden that no good is done by levelling at Louis Napoleon the same invectives which were hurled at the Constituent Assembly sixty years before. Invective is nothing without originality. If a man were to attempt to hurl at his enemy some of the

most expressive epithets, arranged in similarly constructed periods, that Demosthenes hurled at Æschines, they would fall flat. A written letter, or a spoken speech, could not have the force, and effect of the words of Burke in the House of Commons, when called up by Fox's strong expression of admiration of the French Revolution, he said:—

“He hated the old despotism of France and still more he hated the new: it was a plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy, without a single virtue to redeem its crimes; and so far from being, as his honourable friend had inadvertently said, worthy of imitation, he would spend his last breath and the last drop of his blood—he would quit his best friends and join his worst enemies—to oppose the least tittle of such a spirit or such an example in England.”

As soon as the monarchy of Louis Philippe was succeeded by the short-lived republic, we have seen that, instead of an effusion of brotherly love together with liberty, equality, and universal philanthropy, one of the first schemes of the philanthropic republic was an invasion of England. Of course a railway projector who sees, or fancies he sees, enormous profits in a Channel Tunnel, shuts his eyes to all other consequences of his Tunnel. He can invest his profits in foreign securities, and leaving England to her fate, retire to Switzerland or America, rich

and contented and—something else—affording to the world an example of “the cold calculating baseness of commercial avarice.”

In the work before referred to, “1793 and 1853,” published in 1853, Mr. Cobden says (p. 85):—

“Nobody, I believe, denies that Louis Napoleon received the votes of a majority of the French people. In the election which took place for the presidency, when he was supported by three-fourths of the electors, his opponent General Cavaignac had possession of the ballot-boxes, and there could be no fraud to account for the majority. With what view did the French people elect him Emperor? To maintain, in the first place, as he is pledged to do, the principles of 1789; and, in the next, to preserve order, keep the peace, and enable them to prosper. Nobody denies that these are the objects desired by France. Yet we are told that he will, regardless of public opinion, plunge the country into war.”

In the preceding page, too, of the same work, Mr. Cobden uses these words of Louis Napoleon, “*Public opinion, by which alone he reigns.*” In excuse for these remarks, it may perhaps be said that at that time it was not possible to obtain even a glimpse of the true history of the *coup d'état* of December, 1851.

Mr. Cobden's prophetic vision has been appealed to sometimes of late. In this case it does not seem to have been very trustworthy. Did or did not Louis

Napoleon "plunge the country into war"? What else could he do? He was compelled for the very life of him to do something to other people to help to make Frenchmen forget what he had done to them. He had stamped out the life of the French nation and left it but a mere corpse—galvanized, indeed, into occasional starts of vitality by the springs of that vast system of machinery by which a clerk can dictate to a nation. But Mr. Cobden's statement must be examined in detail.

In the first place it may be admitted that the election to the presidency had been conducted with perfect fairness. Mr. Cobden, however, seems to proceed to the further conclusion, though he does not say so in so many words, that the election to the office of Emperor was also conducted with fairness—with as much fairness indeed as the election to the office of President had been conducted. But between the two elections certain strange events had taken place. There had been sudden imprisonment; there had been sudden murder; there had been sudden massacre on a larger scale, as far as my historical knowledge goes, than had been known since the wholesale murders of Sulla called proscriptions. It is impossible to judge of the relation to each other of the two elections by

jumping from the one to the other. There was a chasm between them in which were engulfed the bloody corpses of many thousands of Frenchmen—how many will never be known.

Mr. Kinglake has given a striking description of the result of the deeds of this Bonaparte and his accomplices:—

“Of all men dwelling in cities the people of Paris are perhaps the most warlike. Less almost than any other Europeans are they accustomed to overvalue the lives of themselves and their fellow-citizens. With them the joy of the fight has power to overcome fear and grief, and they had been used to great street-battles; but they had not been used of late to witness the slaughter of people unarmed and helpless. At the sight of what was done on that 4th of December the great city was struck down as though by a plague. A keen-eyed Englishman, who chanced to come upon some of the people retreating from these scenes of slaughter, declared that their countenances were of a strange livid hue which he had never before seen. This was because he had never before seen the faces of men coming straight from the witnessing of a massacre. They say that the shock of being within sight and hearing the shrieks broke down the nervous strength of many a brave though tender man, and caused him to burst into sobs as though he were a little child. . . . Because of the palsy that came upon her after the slaughter on the Boulevard, Paris was delivered bound into the hands of Prince Louis Bonaparte, and Morny, and Maupas or De Maupas, and St. Arnaud, formerly Le Roy. And the benefit which Prince Louis derived from the massacre was not transitory. It is a

maxim of French politics that happen what may, a man seeking to be a ruler of France must not be ridiculous.”*

To proceed now to the second part of the process as stated in the passage I have quoted from Mr. Cobden, I will repeat the words used by Mr. Cobden. They are these:—

“With what view did the French people elect him Emperor? To maintain, in the first place, as he is pledged to do, the principles of 1789; and, in the next, to preserve order, keep the peace, and enable them to prosper.”

Mr. Cobden does not say that the election was conducted with perfect fairness, as that for the presidency had been; but his words taken with those he uses in the preceding page—“*public opinion by which alone he reigns*”—unquestionably lead to such an inference. What really took place I will give in the words of Mr. Kinglake:—

“At length the time came for the operation of what was called the Plebiscite. The arrangements of the plotters had been of such a kind as to allow France no hope of escape from anarchy, except by submitting herself to the dictatorship of Louis Bonaparte; for although the President in his proclamation had declared that if the country did not like his Presidency they might choose some other in his place, no such alternative was really offered. According to the wording of the plebiscite, a vote given for any candidate other than

* Kinglake, *Invasion of the Crimea*, 5th edit., vol. i., pp. 286-289 (Wm. Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1874).

Louis Bonaparte would have been null. An elector was only permitted to vote 'Yes,' or 'No ;' and it seems plain that the prospect of anarchy involved in the negative vote would alone have operated as a sufficing menace. Therefore, even if the collection of the suffrages had been carried on with perfect fairness, the mere stress of the question proposed would have made it impossible that there should be a free election : the same central power which, nearly four years before, had compelled the terrified nation to pretend that it loved a republic, would have now forced the same helpless people to kneel, and say they chose for their one only lawgiver the man recommended to them by Monsieur de Morny.

"Having the army and the whole executive power in their hands, and having preordained the question to be put to the people, the brethren of the Elysée, it would seem, might have safely allowed the proceeding to go to its sure conclusion without further coercing the vote ; and if they had done this, they would have given a colour to the assertion that the result of the plebiscite was a national ratification of their act. But remembering what they had done, and having blood on their hands, they did not venture upon a free election. What they did was this : they placed thirty-two departments under martial law ; and since they wanted nothing more than a sheet of paper and a pen and ink in order to place every other department in the same predicament, it can be said without straining a word, that potentially, or actually, the whole of France was under martial law.

"Therefore men voted under the sword. But martial law is only one of the circumstances which constitute the difference between an honest election and a plebiscite of the Bonaparte sort. To the adversaries of the Elysée all effective means of concerted action were forbidden by Morny and Maupas. Except

for the uses of the Elysée there was no press. Even the printing and distributing of negative voting-tickets was made penal ; and during the ceremony which was called an ' election,' several persons were actually arrested, and charged with the offence of distributing negative voting-tickets, or persuading others to vote against the President."*

Who would suppose that a man of Mr. Cobden's abilities should have had nothing more than what has been quoted to say about Louis Napoleon Bonaparte ? For though Louis Bonaparte did not possess the abilities and force of character which made the Roman Emperor so terrible a tyrant, there was a certain parallel in the two situations ; for Louis Bonaparte stood somewhat in the relation to the first Bonaparte in which Tiberius stood to the first Cæsar. Louis Bonaparte was probably a more humane man by nature than the first Bonaparte—which could not be said of Tiberius as compared with Julius Cæsar ; and yet, though Louis Bonaparte might not be naturally blood-thirsty, I fear the records of historical truth will show him to have had more blood on his hands than Tiberius—that he was, in fact, as blood-stained a man as Sulla.

The career of Prince Louis Bonaparte, known in French history as Napoleon the Third, is indeed

* Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, 5th edit., i., pp. 300-302.

an anomaly in history. For though he can surely not be compared to Tiberius in force of character or in military or political knowledge and ability, he did more than Tiberius can be said to have done. He stamped out the life of a great nation for some twenty years. What Tiberius did was to complete the work of Julius and Augustus in stamping out the life of the Roman Republic. But he only completed the work begun by the first Cæsar, and carried on by his immediate successor, whereas the work begun by the first Bonaparte had been interrupted—broken off completely ;—and this man and his band of coadjutors had to do it over again from the beginning. They succeeded in what they had undertaken; and how they succeeded is as strange and terrible a tale, as Mr. Kinglake tells it, as can be found in the records of the world ; and more wonderful, because, as Mr. Kinglake has shown, the head conspirator among these adventurers wanted that quality which has usually been considered indispensable for such work—the power of calm though rapid thought in moments of crisis and of danger. It was indeed sad for France that a man should be able to stamp out her life who certainly could not be reckoned a man of genius in the sense in which the first

Bonaparte was a man of genius, and whose daring was to that of the first Bonaparte as the murder of unarmed citizens, and of old men, women and children, was to the first Bonaparte's passage of the Bridge of Lodi, swept by the Austrian artillery, at the head of his grenadiers. "You were first," said someone afterwards at St. Helena. "No," was the reply, "Lannes was first—I was second." When great genius and daring and energy go together, no wonder if a nation bear with the dominion of such a man, and even submit for a time to the dominion of those who only inherit his name. But to inherit or assume a name is not to inherit the genius which made that name famous, is not to inherit the mind, which gave dominion over mankind. The term "inheritor of a great name" is an error; a great name is attached to him who earned it, and cannot descend to heirs like land or money.

After having escaped from the tyranny of the landlords, we must not allow ourselves to fall under the tyranny of the traders and manufacturers and railway projectors—a tyranny manifested in the form of laying the island of Great Britain open to invasion and rendering it subject to heavy taxes to support armaments and fortifications in

order that traders and manufacturers and railway speculators may have increased facilities for filling their pockets at other people's expense.

I believe I have already quoted the words of a certain French Vice-Admiral :—"The English have not the warrior-spirit; and if we have war with them, we should have but one thing to do, that is, a landing."* It may be inferred that this French Vice-Admiral was a very small boy when the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo were fought, or believed that the French won both those battles. Mr. Cobden, who seems to admire and cry up France and every thing French, as he depreciates England and every thing English on all occasions, might perhaps have approved of this Frenchman's opinion, published by his Government in the official records of a Government Inquiry.† Mr. Cobden says ("1793 and 1853," p.5):

* *Enquête Parlementaire*, quoted at page 326 of *Our Naval Position and Policy*, by a Naval Peer. (London: Longmans and Co., 1859.)

† The conclusion to be drawn from the whole scope of the French Report and Evidence, is that it was the purpose of France in 1849-50 to strike a decisive blow on the first opportunity England should afford her, which, if successful in affording them a landing, would, according to their own opinion, enable them to drive the English before them or

—"When shall we be proof against the transparent appeal to our vanity involved in the 'liberties of Europe' argument?" He then proceeds to say that, "we never had forty thousand British troops engaged in one field of battle on the Continent during the whole war;" and infers thence that we could have had nothing to do with putting down Bonaparte; in fact, that the Russian winter did the business, just as the Irish famine did the

slaughter them like sheep. When a Government publishes what the French Government put forth in its *Enquête Parlementaire* of 1849-50, I do not think we are guilty of infringing the comity of nations in calling this insolence. There is a monarchical insolence and a republican insolence. This is republican insolence, and I think it exceeds monarchical insolence in offensiveness. If Russia were to come under republican government, a Russian republic would probably be a worse neighbour than a Russian Czar. If a French republic of 1870 fancies it is to run the course of the French republic of seventy years before, with a military genius of the highest order to fight its battles, the French Republic of 1883 may find itself very much mistaken. A Channel Tunnel to bring us nearer to such a neighbour may be agreeable to the high philanthropic aspirations of the advanced thinker of the Peace Party, who proposed to receive the invaders with such an effusion of hospitality and brotherly love, as could not fail to convert the Zouave into the friend of the family. Brotherly love! and universal philanthropy! From the oldest record to that of yesterday,

business of putting down the bread-tax. There is something in this; and yet Wellington did far more to put down Bonaparte than Cobden did to put down the bread-tax. In answer to Mr. Cobden's "forty thousand British troops" argument, did Mr. Cobden never hear that his hero Bonaparte said that there were only two kinds of troops—good and bad; and that there were no troops in Italy, save the Sardinians, that could stand fire; that they fled like wild ducks at the first volley. Mr. Cobden writes as if he had completely *approfondi* the philosophy of courage and cowardice. I do not presume to say that I know very much of what is meant by standing fire; but a friend of mine who was on Sir De Lacy Evans's staff at the battle of the Alma, where he was knocked off his horse by a splinter of a shell, and at the battle of Inkermann was on the staff of

brotherly love does not shine very bright. In the oldest family on record brotherly love is represented by Cain. And in Sybil (usually spelt Sibyl) it is represented by Lord Marney. Burns says, that Tam o' Shanter loved Souther Johnny like a "vera brither;" and the reason he assigns for this brotherly love is that Tam and Johnny had been "fou for weeks thegither," that is, that they had been drunk for weeks together.

General Pennefather, to whom he gave his horse when the general's horse was killed, and mounted a troop horse which was struck very soon after ; and in one of his journeys to bring up ammunition—the road he had to traverse being swept by the Russian artillery—as he was galloping forward he heard a thud behind him, and, turning his head round, saw his brother staff officer rolling on the ground in the last death agonies, having been struck by a shot and almost cut in two, gave me his notions about standing fire, which were as follows:—

“I do not care twopence for being handed down to posterity any how—such a posterity as it is likely to be. Why, under the tuition of the Quakers and the philanthropists, people have come to such a pass nowadays that they can never speak of any act of war except with a whine and an intimation that it is half criminal ; in another generation they will hold it altogether criminal, and will look upon it as that pious skunk, old —— seems to have done when he entered in his journal—that journal which I believe he wrote with the idea that God Almighty was looking over his shoulder all the time, and would be gammoned by what he read—my uncle's death in action as ‘an awful instance.’

“By the way, did it ever occur to you to speculate what will be the result of the peculiar course of tuition which I have just spoken of ? Perhaps it is all owing to my deficiency

of natural valour, but my impression, derived equally from internal feeling and from observation, is that standing fire is a very unpleasant thing, and extremely repugnant to the natural man. If we in some measure do it now, I take it that it is in virtue of the fag-end of the old-fashioned training which instilled into a man from his babyhood that standing fire was *the* one thing he had to do, and which succeeded in the main in making it easier to most men to stand fire than to refuse to stand it."

Such are the reflections of a man who has had some experience, and consequently has some knowledge of what he is writing about, while Mr. Cobden, who had no knowledge of the matter, wrote dogmatically about it, and called in Gibbon as a witness to support him—Gibbon, though he had been a militia officer, knowing as little about the matter as Mr. Cobden. Mr. Cobden, indeed, quotes these words as spoken by the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords, June 15, 1852: "I believe every man is brave"—words which are in direct opposition to the words attributed to Marshal Lannes, that a man who says he does not know fear is a coward. The account which Colonel Gurwood has given of his sensations when his offer to lead the forlorn hope at Ciudad Rodrigo had been accepted is very instructive.

Colonel Gurwood put together for a special

purpose the particulars of his part in the storm of Ciudad Rodrigo in a pamphlet, of which he printed only fifty copies for private circulation. The preface is dated 14th June, 1845. I have not seen the pamphlet, but the writer of the article, *Gurwood, John*, in the second supplement to *The Penny Cyclopædia*, says that the particulars in his article are taken from one of the fifty copies. The writer of the article appears to be in error in saying that the officer who commanded one of the storming parties was of the rank of major. That officer, whom I have met at the house of a common friend, was at the time I saw him a major, Major Mackie, but at the storm of Ciudad Rodrigo he was Lieutenant Mackie of the Connaught Rangers. His statement—and I believe that he and Colonel Gurwood were both men incapable of wilful inaccuracy or misstatement—was that he accepted the surrender of the governor; that a sword, afterwards found to be that of an aide-de-camp, had been presented to him in token of surrender; and that while he was engaged in saving the lives of two officers who laid hold of him for protection, one on each arm, Lieutenant Gurwood came up and obtained the sword of the governor. Major Mackie died in 1839, and this statement was made public in the

following year in a second edition of that portion of Napier's History relating to the storm of Ciudad Rodrigo, the first having stated that "Mr. Gurwood, who, though wounded, had been among the foremost at the lesser breach, received the governor's sword."

The writer of the paper in *The Cyclopædia* says that the statement of Colonel Gurwood was irreconcilable with that of Major Mackie. I do not see this at all. Lieutenant Mackie supposed that the sword of an aide-de-camp was the sword of the governor, and while he was protecting two French officers, Lieutenant Gurwood came up and obtained the sword of the governor. There is nothing irreconcilable here. The luck was on Gurwood's side in getting the governor's sword, and as no doubt was thrown on the truth of Gurwood's story, his finding the French officer whose life he had saved does no more for his case than Major Mackie's finding the two French officers whose lives he had saved would have done for his case. No one that knew Colonel Gurwood or Major Mackie would have doubted their word as men of veracity and honour.

Colonel Gurwood's narrative of his adventures during that night is one of the most valuable

pieces of evidence on the question on which Gibbon and Mr. Cobden express themselves so dogmatically. When he knew that his offer had been accepted, he says:—"I kept on eating, principally bread, but I carefully controlled my thirst, knowing how insatiable it becomes under nervous excitement. On the concerted signal for the assault—three guns from the batteries—my heart beat double quick, and I applied my mouth to the calabash of Jack Jones, from which I swallowed a gulp of 'aguardiente.' On arriving at the top of the breach, I saw a musket levelled not far from my head, and a Frenchman in the act of pulling the trigger. I bobbed my head in time, but was wounded and stunned by the fire. I found myself at the bottom of the breach. I cannot tell how long I was there, but on putting my hand to the back of my head, where I felt that I had been wounded, I found that the skull was not fractured." He again scrambled up the breach, and gained the rampart of the bastion. Here he saw one of his men, Pat Lowe, in the act of bayoneting a French officer who resisted being plundered, and he saved the Frenchman by knocking down the Irishman. His prisoner guided him to a tower where the French governor and some officers had shut them-

selves up. He summoned them to surrender, and the door was unbarred; but Pat Lowe, who had rejoined him, called out, "Dear Mr. Gurwood, they will murder you!" and as he entered he was seized round the neck and expected a sword in his body; but he found that the person who had seized him round the neck was the governor, and that he yielded himself his prisoner. Gurwood conducted him to Lord Wellington on the ramparts, who said, "Did you take him?" and on his replying that he did, handed to him the governor's sword, with the words: "Take it, you are the proper person to wear it." He wore it ever afterwards.

It seemed to be the end and aim of Mr. Cobden's book to cry down military men and cry up cotton-spinners and calico-printers. Military men may be good and bad, and cotton-spinners and calico-printers may be more good than bad. But the mistake was that Mr. Cobden and some others after Peel's panegyric assumed Mr. Cobden to be not only a great, but a universal genius; which of course was a mistake. He was indeed an able man, and an eloquent man in a masculine kind of eloquence, and I agree with Mr. Forster, that in dividing the boroughs I should prefer Mr. Cobden's plan of the single member constituencies to the

double member. The impression left by some of Mr. Cobden's letters which have been published, in which the writer gives opinions about the Government of British India, and about the Prussian Government as compared with the English Constitution, is that Mr. Cobden had not studied the subject of the English Constitution, of British India, of Canada, or of the English Colonies, sufficiently to have accurate knowledge on that subject.

Although Mr. Cobden has at once overlooked Bonaparte's true character and overrated his genius, he has shown a tendency to underrate the genius of Wellington, and in fact to run down military talent altogether. The truth is more nearly attained in some remarks of a military friend of mine, who has seen service enough to enable him to say that a man who has been in a battle all the time it lasted knows no more of that battle than a herring does of the North Sea. He says:—

“ You say that Cromwell's genius in war was creative, not strategic. I think that this is well put, and useful, as tending to lead to a reflection which has often occurred to myself, viz., the number of different geniuses (if that is the plural) which a man must have on hand who hopes to be a first-class general. Perhaps professional conceit may have something to do with it, but I have always thought that, to make a

great general, it took a more *perfect and complete* man than would be required for any other walk in life. I do not say that to make a Napoleon, it requires that any one faculty should be so highly developed as would be wanted for a Newton; what I mean is, that while a Newton can be made by one abnormally developed faculty in an otherwise mediocre mind, a Napoleon must have power in every direction."

I venture to think that these remarks are at once just and profound. He who made them, like another friend I have referred to in these pages, is perhaps one of those subtle thinkers who appear in this world and live and die unheard, leaving no name behind them.

"My Lords," said Nelson, in a speech in the House of Lords, November 23, 1802, "I have in different countries seen much of the miseries of war. I am therefore in my most inmost soul a man of peace. Yet would I not, for the sake of any peace, however fortunate, consent to sacrifice one jot of England's honour. Our honour is inseparably combined with our genuine interest."

The gentlemen of the English Peace Society have not shown in the peace question the logical power which they have shown in other matters. When they want to purchase a commodity, they do not adopt as a mode of obtaining it at a reasonable price a display of extreme anxiety to possess

it. And they could hardly, as men of average rationality, expect that sending a deputation to the Emperor Nicholas was a likely way to lead to peace.

Mr. Kinglake says the Peace party—

“Went on and on, and still on, until their foremost thinker reached the conclusion that, in the event of an attack upon our shores, the invaders ought to be received with such an effusion of hospitality and brotherly love as could not fail to disarm them of their enmity and convert the once dangerous Zouave into the valued friend of the family.”*

In a note to this passage, Mr. Kinglake says:—

“I have no copy of this curious pamphlet before me, but it has been quoted (I believe by Lord Palmerston) in the House of Commons, and therefore the passage alluded to in the text might no doubt be found in Hansard. The writer, I remember, went farther than is above stated. He argued that the French people would be so shamed by the kindness shown to their troops that they would never rest until they had paid us a large pecuniary indemnity for any losses or inconvenience which the invasion may have caused.”

I have not seen the pamphlet referred to by Mr. Kinglake, but I think it may probably be a work advertised at the end of a Library edition of Mr. Cobden's three letters, published under the

* Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, i., 415, 5th edition. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1874.

title, "1793 and 1853," early in the year 1853, of which I had the honour to receive a presentation copy from the author in August, 1853. The work, which would seem to be the pamphlet referred to by Mr. Kinglake, is thus advertised—"Defensive war proved to be a denial of Christianity, and of the Government of God. With illustrative facts and anecdotes. By Henry C. Wright. 12mo., cloth, price 2s."

The members of the Peace Society are not, however, always consistent; at least they did not always show themselves consistent in their proceedings before the Crimean War. At a Peace and Anti-Loan meeting, in 1849, Lord Dudley Stuart vehemently advocated the propriety of England's giving "energetic and efficient support" to the Turk in resisting Russia; and Mr. Cobden gave his support to Lord Dudley Stuart's arguments, which must be understood to have meant war, if they meant anything. In fact, a man of Mr. Cobden's sagacity must have seen the utter impracticability of such doctrines as those attributed by Mr. Kinglake to the "foremost thinker" of the Peace party.

It is remarkable that the peace-at-any-price doctrine enunciated in the advertisement I have

quoted had been acted upon, and put to the test in England at a time when the coasts of England were infested, not by Zouaves, but by Barbary pirates. But I have never discovered that the extremely pacific dispositions of the King who then reigned in England had any effect whatever towards turning the once dangerous Barbary pirate into the valued friend of the family. On the contrary, all the evidence which I have seen bearing on the subject leads to the conclusion that the pacific disposition of the English King, so far from producing a similar disposition in the Barbary pirate, only encouraged and excited him to more extensive depredations.

Mr. Cobden has thrown his work into the form of Letters to the Reverend —, and begins with these words:—"Accept my thanks for your kindness in forwarding me a copy of your Sermon upon the death of the Duke of Wellington;" and ends with these words:—"When the Master whom you serve mingled in the affairs of this life, it was not to join in the exaltation of military genius or share in the warlike triumphs of nation over nation, but to preach 'Peace on earth and goodwill toward men.' " Suppose some of the Peace-at-any-price Corporation had gone on a pacific mission to

Napoleon Bonaparte before the Battle of Waterloo as they went to the Czar Nicholas before the Crimean War. It would no more have stopped the career of Bonaparte than it stopped that of Nicholas. Those traders who are so eager to get rich and cry out for "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men," do not see that they and their goods would be a prey to the thousands of robbers who swarm, and will continue to swarm upon earth, if it were not for that *infanterie Anglaise* which at Waterloo made good General Foy's remark to Bonaparte on the morning of the battle—"L'*infanterie Anglaise* en duel c'est le diable."

In the course of an adventurous and stormy life—of the result of which he modestly said that he had been "successful in life"—the Duke of Wellington had opportunities of seeing the effect of the phrase "Peace on earth and goodwill to men," and he wrote thus in a letter to the Earl of Liverpool, dated "Sta. Marinha, 23rd March, 1811":—

"I shall be sorry if Government should think themselves under the necessity of withdrawing from this country, on account of the expense of the contest. From what I have seen of the objects of the French Government and the sacrifices they make to accomplish them, I have no doubt that if the British army were for any reason to withdraw from the

Peninsula, and the French Government were relieved from the pressure of military operations on the Continent, *they would incur all risks to land an army in his Majesty's dominions. Then indeed would commence an expensive contest; then would his Majesty's subjects discover what are the miseries of war, of which, by the blessing of God, they have hitherto had no knowledge; and the cultivation, the beauty, the prosperity of the country, and the virtue and happiness of its inhabitants would be destroyed, whatever might be the result of the military operations. God forbid that I should be a witness, much less an actor, in the scene.*"*

And in his memorable letter to Sir John Burgoyne in 1847, which Mr. Cobden labours to make appear to be the work of a man in his dotage—suffering from softening of the brain—though the words in it are very similar to those in the letter quoted above, and written near forty years before, the Duke says:—

"I am bordering on seventy-seven years, passed in honour. I hope that the Almighty may protect me from being the witness of the tragedy which I cannot persuade my contemporaries to take measures to avert."

* Gurwood's Selections from the Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, No. 515, p. 457.





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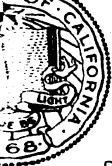
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